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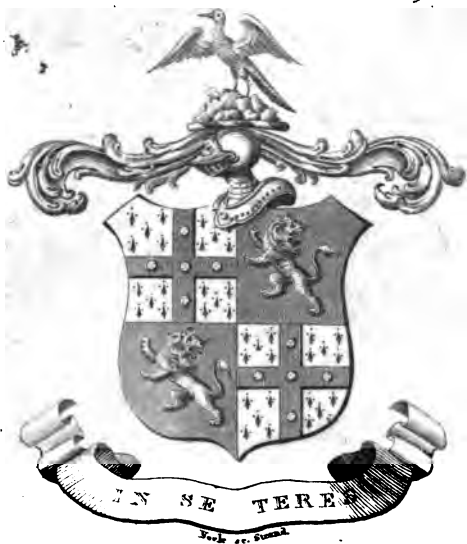
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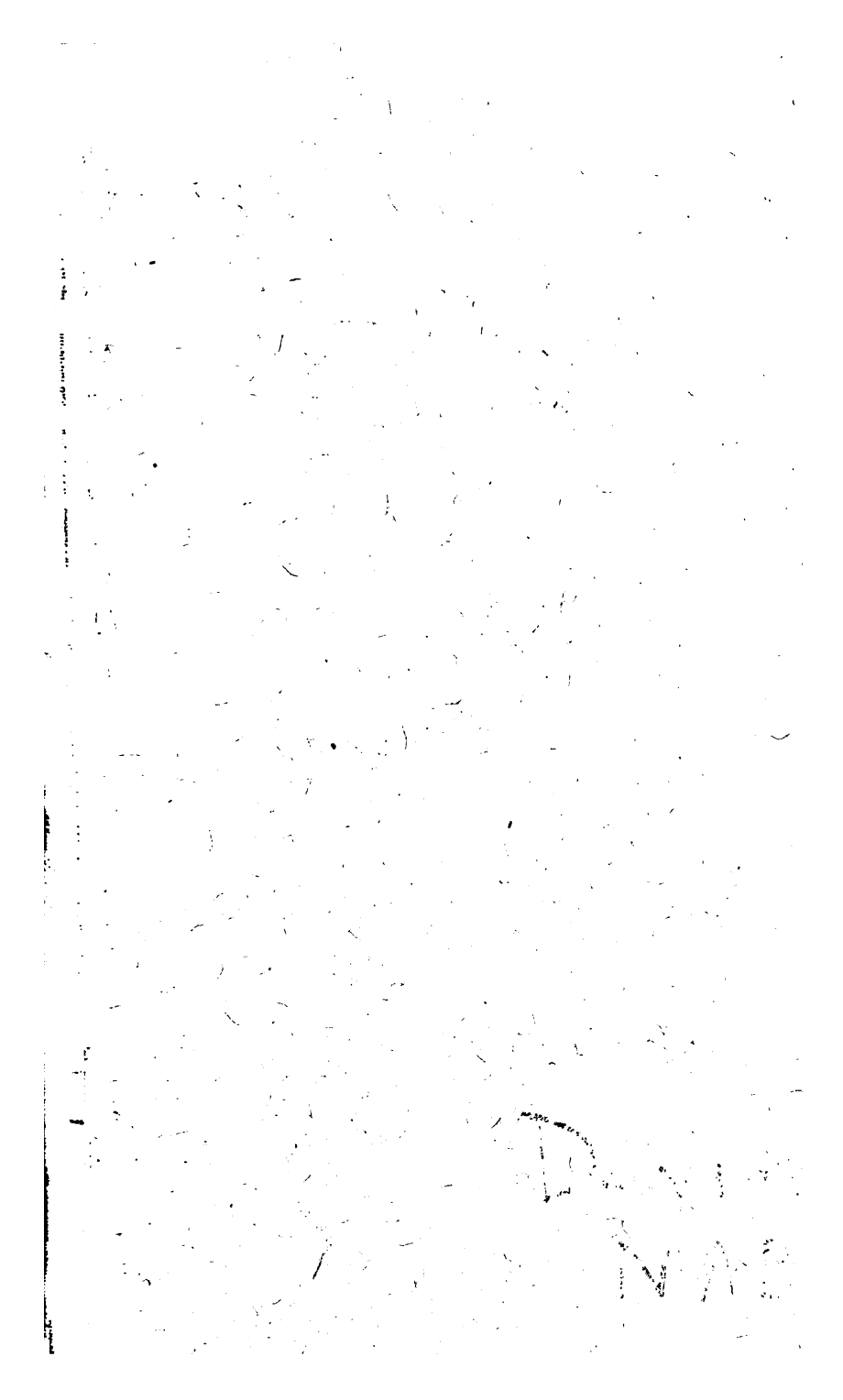
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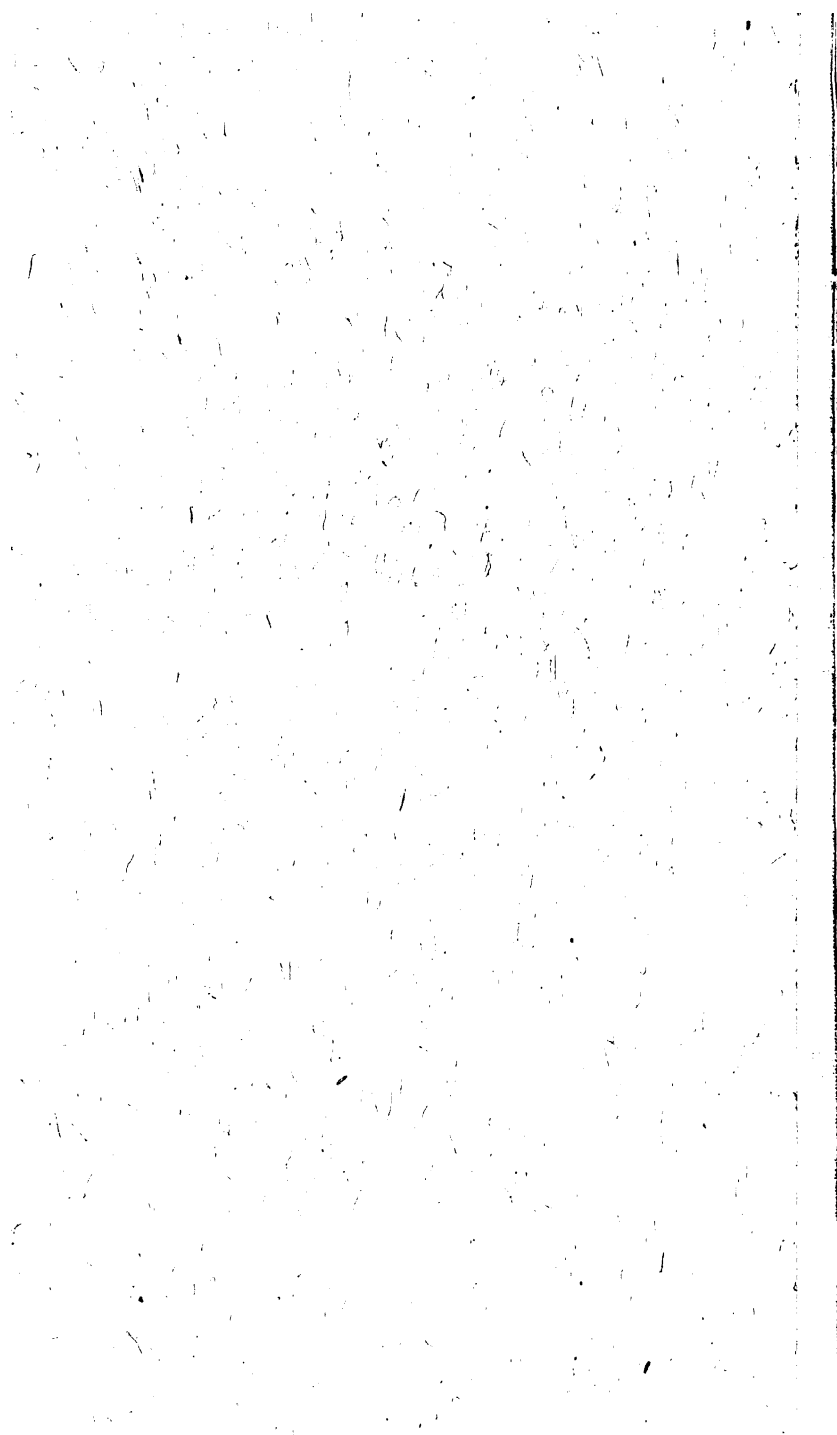
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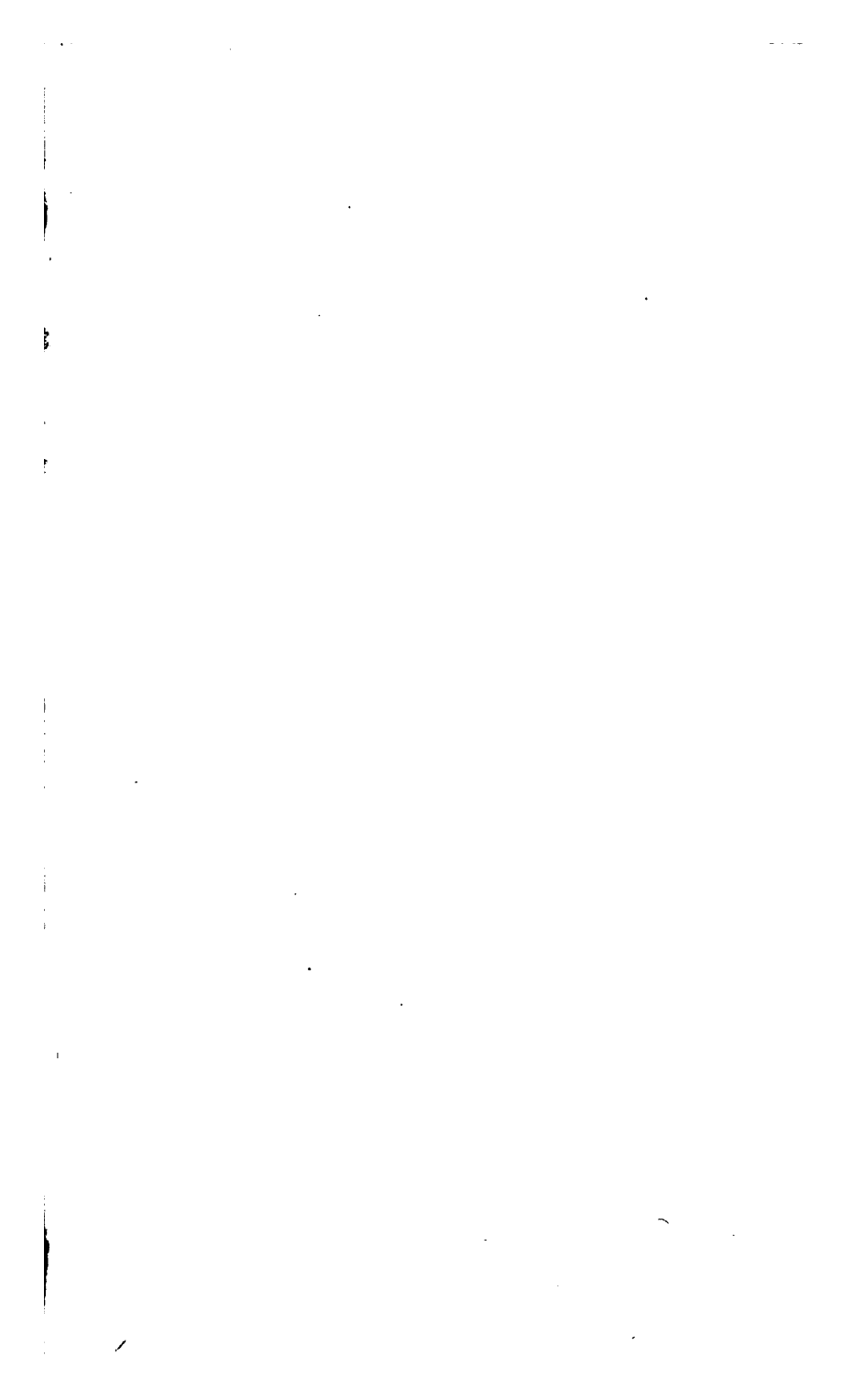
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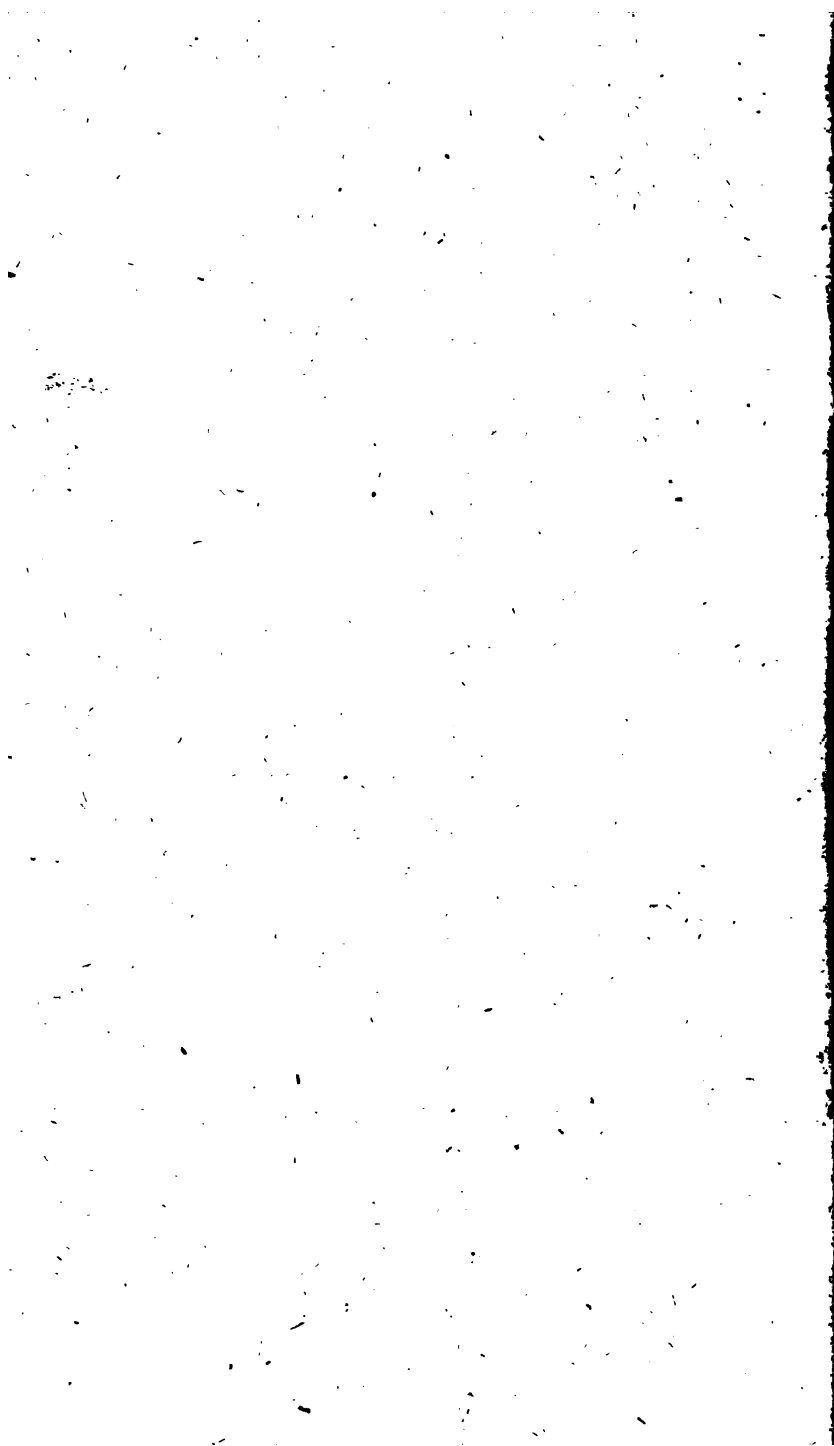






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NATL



DRAMATIC MICELLANIES;

CONSISTING OF

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON SEVERAL

PLAYS OF SHAKSPEARE:

WITH

A REVIEW OF HIS PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS, AND
THOSE OF VARIOUS EMINENT WRITERS.

AS REPRESENTED

BY MR. GARRICK, AND
OTHER CELEBRATED COMEDIANS.

WITH ANECDOTES OF DRAMATIC POETS, ACTORS, &c.

BY THOMAS DAVIES,

AUTHOR of MEMOIRS of the LIFE of
DAVID GARRICK, Esq.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

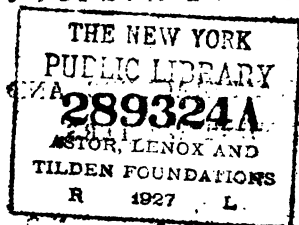
Μισὸν πλῆττει αὐτὸν, κολακίῃ τροφὸν, ὕδα παρ' ὄφρου
Στήσομαι· εἰδ' ὀλίγης δαίτος ἐλευθερίῃ. Epig. Græc.

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D R A M A T I C
M I S C E L L A N I E S.

King John.

CHAPTER I.

Three plays written on the subject of K. John.

— *When Shakspeare's K. John was first published.*—*Shakspeare indebted to the Troublesome Reign of K. John.*—*Colley Cibber's Fatal Tyranny.*—*Cibber's arrogance.*—*Theatrical progress of the Fatal Tyranny.*—*Line in Pope's Dunciad upon it.*—*Revival of Shakspeare's K. John by Rich.*—*Its success, and an account of the actors, particularly Walker, Hale, and Mrs. Hallam.*—*Sarcasm of Quin.*—*Mistake of Mr. Steevens and Mr. Theobald.*—*Scene of Bastardy.*—*Queen Eleanor's logic in favour*

VOL. I.

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of the Bastard Falconbridge.—Explanation of the word trick.—Mr. Garrick puzzled to procure a contrast.—Barry's perplexity.

ON the subject of King John three plays have been written. That, which is called the Troublesome Reign of King John, was attributed to Shakspeare and Rowley by Mr. Pope, and by Mr. Steevens to Shakspeare alone ; but, on mature consideration, this gentleman has retracted his opinion ; Mr. Malone has, with great appearance of probability, ascribed it to Marlow. Our author's K. John was first published, with the rest of his works, in 1623. The late commentators have justly observed, that many of Shakspeare's best pieces are formed on the ground-work of others. He seems more indebted to the author of the Troublesome Reign of K. John, for his plot and characters, and even his sentiments, than to any other writer. Colley Cibber's Papal Tyranny was taken from Shakspeare's K. John

John, but he was not so happy in his alterations of this tragedy as in his King Richard the Third. In this last play, Colley very dextrously made up a very pleasing pasticcio from a diligent perusal of all Shakspeare's historical plays, scarcely making use of a line or thought which was his own. His Papal Tyranny he pretends was written to supply Shakspeare's deficiencies, but more especially the want of warm resentment in a king of England when insulted by a pope's nuncio; and, his play being acted in 1744, when the nation was alarmed with the threats of an invasion by a popish pretender, the popular sentiments, against the encroachments of papal influence, met with applause. Colley's vanity so far transported him, that, in his Dedication, he told Lord Chesterfield, he had endeavoured to make his play more like one 'than what he found it in Shakspeare.' But Cibber lived long enough to see his Papal Tyranny entirely neglected; and, what must have been more mortifying to

a man of his extreme vanity, the original play revived with great success. His bounding, though well-meant, declamation against the insolent pretensions of papal power, could not make amends for his mutilations of Shakspeare: and especially for his murdering two characters of our inimitable poet, not inferior perhaps to any which fell from his pen; Lady Constance and the Bastard Falconbridge. However, it is to Cibber, I believe, we owe the revival of this tragedy, which had lain dormant from the days of Shakspeare till 1736.

The Fatal Tyranny had been offered to Mr. Fleetwood, the manager of Drury-lane theatre, about nine or ten years before it was acted. This was no sooner known to the public than Cibber was most severely attacked by the critics in the newspapers; Fielding wrote a farce upon the subject, which was played at the little theatre in the Haymarket, though I do not believe it is printed amongst his works. However, the parts in the Fatal Tyranny were distributed,

buted, and a time fixed for its performance: but the clamour against the author, whose presumption was highly censured for daring to meddle with Shakspeare, increased to such a height, that Colley, who had smarted more than once for dabbling in tragedy, went to the playhouse, and, without saying a word to any body, took the play from the prompter's desk, and marched off with it in his pocket. Pope, in his new edition of the Dunciad, which he had taken the pains to alter, in order to dethrone Theobald and place Cibber in his room, in the following line hints at the cautious conduct of the poet-laureat:

King John in silence modestly expires.

DUNC. Book I.

So much was said, and with propriety, by the critics who wrote against Cibber in the public prints, in commendation of Shakspeare's K. John, that Mr. Rich very wisely determined to take the hint, and resolved to revive that long-forgotten tragedy. The principal parts, if I can trust

my memory, were thus divided: King John, Mr. Delane; the Bastard, Tom Walker, (the original Macheath,) Hale acted the King of France, and Ryan Cardinal Pandolph; Lady Constance by Mrs. Hallam. Of Delane, Walker, and Ryan, I have spoken at large in the Life of Garrick; and in the course of this work shall have frequent occasion to mention them. Hale was in person tall and well-proportioned, his voice strong and harmonious, his deportment manly, and his action not displeasing; his ear was so unfaithful, that he was generally monotonous; he wanted that judgement which alone knows how to give dignity to sentiment or warmth and variety to passion. His best performance was Hotspur; he was always to be endured when he restrained himself from doing too much. He was a favourite actor in Bristol, where I think he died in 1746. He was so fond of wearing large full-bottomed wigs, that, to the astonishment of the audience, he acted

acted the part of Charles the First in one which was remarkably long and fair.*

Mrs. Hallam was an actress of such uncommon merit, that she deserves to be particularly remembered. She had signalled herself so greatly as a member of the company acting at Norwich, when her name was Parker, that she received an invitation from Mr. Rich to join his company at Lincoln's-inn Fields. There she long struggled with difficulties; for I have

* It has been said, that this actor was much hurt by Mr. Garrick's mimicry of him in the part of Bayes in the Rehearsal. Hale was present at the play, and laughing very heartily at the mimical exhibitions of Delane, Ryan, Bridgwater, and Giffard: when, on a sudden, Garrick spoke three or four lines of Prince Prettyman, beginning with

“ Oh! what a stranger am I grown of late!”

in a style which conveyed such an exact resemblance of Hale's voice and manner, that the theatre echoed with loud laughter and thundering applause. Hale was shocked at the mortifying scene, and felt the folly and injustice of approving that ridicule of others which he could not bear himself.

been told she was by no means a favourite of the manager: but, on the death of Mrs. Boheme, many of her principal parts fell to the lot of Mrs. Hallam. The great encouragement, she constantly met with from the audience, at once raised her reputation and increased her income. Her merit, indeed, was indisputable; for she succeeded a performer as remarkable for beauty as skill in her profession. Mrs. Hallam was unhappy in a large unweildy person: notwithstanding this unfavourable circumstance, the public always wished to see her in characters which received no advantage from her figure. Monimia was a part which her good understanding would have taught her to resign; but neither the public nor the manager would permit it. You may guess at the unfitness of her figure for young and delicate ladies by Quin's farcism. He observed one morning, at rehearsal, a large tub, or barrel, in which the mad Englishman in the Pilgrim rolls about the stage; he asked the prompter
what

what it was ; but, before he could receive an answer, he cried out, *I see what it is : Mrs. Hallam's stays, in which she played Monimia last night.* Her performance of Lady Constance was natural and impassioned ; though she was not so pathetic in utterance, spirited in action, or dignified in deportment, as Mrs. Cibber in the same part. Her principal characters in tragedy were Lady Macbeth, Belvidera, Roxana, Queen Elizabeth in the Earl of Essex, Zara in the Mourning Bride, Evadne in the Maid's Tragedy, the Queen in Hamlet ; in comedy she excelled in Congreve's Lady Touchwood in the Double Dealer, his Marwood in the Way of the World, Amanda in Cibber's Love's last Shift, Steele's Lady Brumpton in the Funeral, &c. Mrs. Hallam died about the year 1738.

King John was acted several nights with great applause ; but the king was not remarkably well represented by Delane ; he could not easily assume the turbulent and gloomy passions of the character.

Mr.

Mr. Steevens has fallen into a slight mistake, if that note be his, in which it is said, that Hall, Hollingshead, and Stowe, are closely followed in the expressions throughout this, as well as several other historical plays of Shakspeare: Hall begins his Chronicle about two hundred years after the æra in which John began to reign. Mr. Theobald has likewise committed an error: he asserts, that, although the play begins in the 34th year of K. John's life, which was the first of his reign, yet that it takes in only some transactions at the time of his death; whereas the tragedy very properly begins with the claim of John's nephew, Prince Arthur, to the crown: this was one of the most material events in the king's life; and his conduct, to Arthur, Shakspeare very judiciously makes the foundation of all his misfortunes.

If I do not mistake, Mr. Steevens has misunderstood a passage in a speech of Q. Eleanor in the first scene of this play:

This

This might have been prevented, and made whole
With very easy argument of love ;
Which now the *manage* of two kingdoms must
With fearful bloody issue arbitrate.

By the word *manage* I understand the strength and power of France and England, rather than, according to Mr. Steevens, the conduct and administration of them, which seems more remote from the author's meaning; though perhaps the word may comprehend both.

The scene between the two brothers, Robert and Philip Falconbridge, is a very extraordinary one, and hardly to be matched in dramatic poetry. One brother calls the other *bastard*, and accuses his mother of adultery; which charge the other does not flatly deny, but is unwilling to part with his claim to the estate. The original of this quarrel is to be found, I believe, in an old book, quoted by Mr. Steevens, called The History of Lord Falconbridge, Bastard-Son to Richard Cœur de Lion. Our author has followed the old play, with such alterations and additions,

ditions as his genius suggested to him, which I think never shone brighter than in his management of Falconbridge's character.

Shakspeare has avoided a very gross impropriety by not permitting the mother of Falconbridge to be present when her chastity is called in question by her son ; an error which the author of the old play has fallen into. In that, too, Queen Eleanor exerts all her power in favour of the lady, and plays the casuist so acutely, that she merits the reputation of learning which historians ascribe to her. The king observes, in confirmation of what Robert Falconbridge had affirmed, that Philip the Bastard resembled King Richard, whom Robert asserts to have been his father ; the queen's reply is, I think, curious, and worth preserving.

E L E A N O R.

Nay, hear you, sir : you run away too fast.

Know you not, *omne simile non est idem* ?

————— Hark you, good sir ; 'twas thus, and no otherwise : she lay with Sir Robert, your father, and
thought

thought upon King Richard, my son; and so your brother was formed in this fashion.

In the old play, the Bastard draws his sword upon his mother, and threatens to kill her if she conceals the truth. In Shakspeare, the lady's confession is extorted by mirth and pleasantry. In Shakspeare's King John, Queen Eleanor takes notice that the Bastard

Hath a *trick* of Cœur-de-Lion's face.

I am not sure that Mr. Steevens hath hit the full meaning of the word *trick*, though he has brought several authorities to support his interpretation of it.

In this and other places, by the word *trick* Shakspeare means some distinguishing air or feature of the face, in which a strong resemblance of the parent may be discovered.

In the Winter's Tale, Paulina proves the legitimacy of Queen Hermione's daughter by a *trick of face* which she has in common with her father:

Behold,

~~Behold, my lords,~~
The trick of's frown!—

WINTER'S TALE, ACT. II.

So Falstaff, when representing Henry the Fourth, in a mock-scene between the Prince of Wales and himself, tells the Prince,

Thou art my son : I have partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion ; but chiefly *a villainous trick of thine eye, and a foolish hanging of thy nether lip.*

In the same scene the Bastard exclaims,

With that half-face !

That this expression was taken from coins, on which the profile only of our princes was exhibited, Theobald has well enough proved. An author, I think, is always best illustrated by himself : Hotspur, in Henry the Fourth, Act I. in the midst of his extravagant and wild flights, exclaims,

But out upon this half-fac'd fellowship !

Various

Various have been the actors of this brave, generous, romantic, and humorous, character, Falconbridge : but, though Garrick, Sheridan, Delane, and Barry, have attempted it, they all fell short of the merits of Tom Walker. In him alone were found the several requisites for the character : a strong and muscular person, a bold and intrepid look ; manly deportment, vigorous action, and a humour which descended to an easy familiarity in conveying a jest or sarcasm with uncommon poignancy. Garrick had certainly much merit in the Bastard, but the want of the mechanical part was a deficiency not to be remedied by art.

He was at a loss, for some time, to fix upon a Robert Falconbridge, to set off his own figure ; at last he picked out poor Simson, a Scotchman, a modest and honest man, but as feeble in person as he was in acting. Frier John, the contrast to Frier Paul, in the Duenna, was scarce a greater skeleton than Simson. It was a matter of astonishment
to

to every spectator, that Barry, with the superior advantage of a fine person, could make so little of the Bastard. He seemed, in that part, to be quite out of his road : all the humour, gaiety, ease, and gallantry, of Falconbridge, were lost in Barry.

An odd circumstance happened on his endeavouring to repeat the following words in the first act of the play :

Well now I can make any Joan a lady.

He was so embarrassed in the delivery of this single line, that, not being able to repeat the words, he was forced to quit the stage, amidst the general applauses of the audience, who saw and felt his uneasiness. But, what is still more surprising, after going off and returning three several times, with the same kind encouragement of the spectators, he was forced to give it up ; and I believe he did not recover himself till he was relieved by the entrance of Lady Falconbridge.

CHAPTER II.

The character of Philip Augustus. — Princes, of the present age, Trajans when compared to those in the reign of John. — Lymoges, duke of Austria. — Shakspeare oftener adheres to old ballads and romances than chronicle or history. — A vile groupe of sovereign princes. — Henry VI. emperor of Germany. — Popes in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. — The old man of the mountains. — Prince Arthur's right of primogeniture. — Character of Queen Eleanor, at large, from the French historians and Brantome. — An ass wearing shoes. — Reason why Eleanor prefers King John to Arthur. — Explanation of a term in hunting, from Turberville. — The word stay explained. — Observation on Falconbridge's speech at the end of the third act.

ACT II. Scene I.

IN the second act of King John, the poet introduces, amongst other characters, Philip Augustus of France; and, if extreme

tremecunning, unbounded ambition, fraud, perfidy, perjury, rapine, and injustice, could render a monarch a politician, he was certainly the greatest of his time. Shakſpeare was not obliged to ſhew the whole of his character, and, indeed, it is ſo comprehenſively odious, that no audience would have ſuffered it. The princes, who now rule over the greateſt part of Europe, though many of them are little attentive to the real intereſts of their people, and more fond of power than willing to make a right uſe of it, may be termed by the honourable title of Trajans, if compared with the royal monſters of this period. Lymoges, archduke of Auſtria, is, in this ſcene, raiſed from the dead to be puniſhed for his baſe uſage of Richard I. whom he arreſted in his paſſage through his dominions, and afterwards, for a ſtipulated ſum, delivered to the emperor of Germany. The offence, given by Richard, was ſome ſharp or proud expreſſion he let fall againſt the duke, when both were engaged in the
holy

holy wars. The old play could not lead Shakspeare into the error of ascribing the death of Richard to the duke of Austria, as Mr. Steevens has asserted; he was too well acquainted with our chronicles, and especially Hollinghead, to mistake that event. But Shakspeare oftener studies stage effect than he adheres to the truth of history; and, in treating of remote story, he is certainly justifiable for this deviation. But Shakespeare chose too, in this play, and in most others, to follow old romance and ballad rather than chronicle or authenticated story. Perhaps no æra since the creation produced such a groupe of pernicious chief rulers as the time of which I am speaking: besides our own John, Philip, and the duke of Austria, we can reckon, amongst them, Henry VI. emperor of Germany, several popes successively in order, and a very remarkable potentate, called the Old Man of the Mountains. As for Henry, he, of all princes, was the least scrupulous; perfidy, cru-

elty, oppression, and avarice, were his darling passions ; as soon as he got the possession of Richard's person, he threw him into a dungeon ; nay, to insult him more conspicuously, he produced him before the princes of Germany in a diet of the empire : but Richard's undaunted spirit and convincing eloquence produced an effect contrary to the emperor's intention ; they all interceded in his favour, and insisted he should be delivered from confinement ; but, before he would grant him his liberty, he exacted the immense sum of three hundred thousand pounds, equal to a million and a half of our money. The meanest dabbler in history will readily agree, that by far the greatest part of the popes, who lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, were inferior to no kings, that ever lived, in pride, insolence, avarice, injustice, and rapine. If we should grant that in knowledge and learning they were superior to the rest of mankind, it must likewise be owned, that they perverted these acquirements to the worst

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* Hume's Hist. of England, vol. II. p. 18.

ACT II. Scene II.

CHATILLON.

With him along is come the mother queen,
 An Até stirring him to blood and strife.

The term, Até, is very properly bestowed upon this lady ; in her husband king Henry's life-time she was the trumpet of rebellion and treason, and was continually urging her sons to take up arms against their father.

PHILIP.

For thou hast underwrought its lawful king.

Thou hast prevented the lawful successor from enjoying what belongs to him, by cutting off the right of posterity. The feudal law, which was then in full force over all Europe, had established the right of primogeniture. In England, as well as elsewhere, the son of the elder brother was entitled to succeed to his grandfather, preferably to his uncles, though they were nearer allied to the deceased monarch. But the right line of succession had in no country, except Scotland, been
 so

so often broken through, perhaps, as in ours, antecedent to this period. That order, or right, had been violated no less than three times in the space of about fourscore years. Richard, when he set out upon the holy war, declared his nephew Arthur, of Brittany, his successor; but, notwithstanding John's ingratitude and rebellion, he, at the instigation of his mother, by his last will declared him heir to all his dominions: and this will the queen refers to, when, in answer to some outrageous accusations of Lady Constance, she replies,

Thou unadvised scold, I can produce
A will, that bars the title of thy son,

LADY CONSTANCE.

My boy a bastard! By my soul, I think
His father never was so true begot:
It cannot be, and if thou wert his mother.

To understand the propriety of Lady Constance's speech, which contains so heavy a charge, it is necessary that the reader of this tragedy should be previously acquainted with Queen Eleanor's character.

This lady was daughter of the duke of Guienne, and wife to Louis VII. of France, to whom she brought in dowry some of the richest provinces of that kingdom. Her reputation for chastity was far from being clear, when Louis took her with him on a crusade into the holy land. The French historians, and, amongst the rest, Mezeray, an author whose name I am surprised not to find amongst the most eminent French historians, in one of the finest poems which this age has produced*, tells us strange stories of her inordinate and unsatisfied lust. It is said she was particularly fond of Saladin, the emperor; others tell us, that it was Saladin, a private soldier, and a very handsome Saracen, of whom she was deeply enamoured. Let us hear what honest Brantome says, in his blunt, but expressive, language.

“ Our Queen Eleanor, duchess of Guienne, who attended the king, her husband, beyond sea, and who, by frequently conversing

* Hayley on History.

versing amongst arms and the soldiery, gave herself such a loose at last as to have to do with the Saracens, for which the king divorced her, and which cost us dear. She had a mind to try whether these warlike men were as brave champions in a bed-chamber as in the field of battle. Possibly it was her humour to love valiant men."

This plain-spoken writer, in another place, says, that Queen Eleanor was not the only one who went to the holy war in company with Louis ; '*Plusieurs grandes dames avec leur marys se croisèrent, mais non leur jambes, qu'elles ouvrirent, et les largirent à bon escient ; si qu'aucunes y demurerent, et les autres retournèrent, de très bonnes vesses.*'

Notwithstanding Eleanor's ill fame, and her being divorced from her husband for lewdness, in reality, though pretendedly, on account of too near consanguinity, our King Henry II. was not so squeamish as to neglect the opportunity of adding several noble and rich provinces to his dominions by accepting her hand. They
were

were both in the prime and vigour of life, and their eagerness to come together was evident by the quick journeys they took to meet each other. No couple of ardent lovers seemed more willing to be united in the nuptial bond than Henry and Eleanor. Their happiness did not last long; she was as jealous of Henry as her first husband had been of her, and with reason: but Henry was not so mild as Louis; he confined her in prison during the greatest part of his reign. I shall conclude this note with the remarkable words of Mezeray: "This woman, consummate in all sorts of wickedness, lived eighty years, kept up a war for above sixty years, and settled a hatred between France and England, that has continued above three ages; so that with reason we may say of her, what the Greek poet said of Menelaus's wife, that we have suffered not a ten, but a *four hundred, years war, with fire and sword, by means of this woman.*"

FALCONBRIDGE.

It lies as lightly on the back of him

As great Alcides' *shoes* upon an ass.

A more whimsical and ludicrous image cannot be presented to the mind, than an ass trotting up and down, his hoofs covered over with fair large buskins, fit for the foot of Hercules. The sense is very clear, but Theobald, supposing that the ass could carry shoes no where but on his back, altered *shoes* to *shews*. Mr. Steevens has, from several parallel passages of old authors, proved the frequent use of the term *Hercules' shoes*, apparently from the old proverb, *ex pede Herculem*.

LADY CONSTANT.

Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will

Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig.

The inveterate hatred of these two ladies, the Queen and the Duchess of Brittany, was founded on something more substantial than mere personal pique. Eleanor, it is said by historians, had a stronger affection towards her nephew Arthur than her son John; but she justly apprehended,
if

if Arthur had succeeded to the crown, his mother, who was a woman of an excellent understanding and of an undaunted mind, would have had the direction of his affairs; this prompted the dowager to espouse the cause of John, who paid great deference to her counsels.

ENGLISH HERALD.

And, like a jolly troop of huntsmen, come
Our lusty English, all with purple hands,
Dy'd in the dying slaughter of their foes.

There is in Julius Cæsar, Act III. a passage quite similar to this; Mark Antony, in an apostrophe to the dead body of Cæsar, compares his murderers to hunters stained with the blood of the slain deer.

Pardon me, Julius, here wast thou bay'd, brave hart!
Here didst thou fall, and here thy hunters stand,
Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy lethe.

Dr. Johnson, in a note upon the first cited passage, thinks it was one of the savage practices of the chase, for all the hunters to stain their hands in the blood of the deer as a trophy.

Upon

Upon looking into Turberville's book of Hunting, I can see no trace of that practice; but there are two different accounts of the French and English manner of dissecting or breaking up the deer. In dividing the several parts of the deer, the French employed the hand of the huntsman alone; but our English kings, barons, and other great men, took part of that office upon themselves. *Our order is, says Turberville, that the prince or chiefe (if so please them) do alight, and take assaye of the deere, with a sharpe knife, the which is done in this maner; the deere being layde upon his backe, the prince, chiefe, or such as they do appoint, comes to it, and the chiefe huntsman, kneeling, if it be to a prince, doth hold the deere by the fore foot, while the prince or chiefe do cut a slit, drawn alongst the brysket of the deere.*

The deer's head is also cut off by the prince or chief; in these operations, the dissecters must necessarily be sprinkled or besmeared with the blood of the animal, and
to

to this our author, in both passages, seems plainly to allude.

FALCONBRIDGE.

—————Here's a *stay*;

That shakes the rotten carcase of old death
Out of his rags.

I must own, I see no great difficulty in the word *stay*; which means no more, notwithstanding all the attributes given to it by the speaker, than a very great and almost insurmountable obstacle. Perhaps the power of the word *stay* may be best known from a very old author; from Gawin Douglas's Translation of Virgil take the four following lines:

Ane port there is whom the est-fludis has
In manere of ane boule or bay,
With rochis set forgane the streme full *stay*,
To brek the salt fame of the seyis stoure.

The very learned and modest author of the Glossary to this book, for no man knows to whom he is obliged for that excellent and learned commentary of old and difficult words, Scottish and Saxon, explains
stay

stay by *steep*, "as we say in Scotland, a *stay brae*, a high bank of difficult ascent, from the verb *stay*, to stop or hinder, because the steepness retards those who climb it, as the Latins say, *iter impeditum*, *lucæ impedita*; or, from the Belgic, *stegigh*, *præruptus*."

Mr. Stevens and Mr. Malone have brought many passages from old writers to prove the use of the word *stay* in the sense wherein it is applied by Shakspeare.

BEASTARD.
 "Mad world! Mad kings! Mad composition!"

Theobald, with great propriety, finishes the second act with this soliloquy of Falconbridge, which is a very humorous and satirical application to the selfish feelings of the far greatest part of mankind. But why *mad* world! *mad* kings! and *mad* composition? The treaty was a counterpart to almost all the treaties which have been made between princes for many ages past. Honour, faith, justice, and common honesty, on these occasions, are little regarded; and interest, or commodity, as Shakspeare

speare terms it, solely kept in view by the contractors. It is true, that treaties are entered into in the most solemn manner, and in the name of the holy and undivided Trinity ; but this is matter of mere form, and, by many princes, as little remembered as a coronation-oath, which is always taken with great solemnity, and but seldom called to mind, except with a view to make free with it.

Had Shakspeare said *bad* world, &c. it would have been nearer the mark. But, in our author's language, which is equally copious and licentious, the word *mad* sometimes signifies, as it does here, *strange ! odd ! preposterous ! absurd !*

CHAPTER III.

Character of Lady Constance. — Admirably acted by Mrs. Cibber. — Mrs. Butler set up as her rival. Quin's opinion of Mrs. Cibber. — High tides in the calendar. — Mrs. Cibber and Winstone. — Reasons why Mr. Macklin should not have acted Pandulph. — Quin's sarcasm. — Cibber inferior, in the Pope's Legate, to Macklin, and why. — Mrs. Pritchard refuses Colley Cibber's advice. — Stephen Langton's character. — Shakspeare not a Roman Catholic. — Anecdote of Walker and Boman.

HITHERTO the character of Constance has been seen to little advantage. Her speeches were rather more conformable to the scold or virago than the injured princess and afflicted mother. In the first scene of the third act she appears with the dignity of just resentment and majesty of maternal grief, To suppose that the art of acting was not amply, if

D

not

not perfectly, understood and practised, in the days of our author, would be an injury to the feelings of every intelligent reader. How many variations of action and passion are in the first speech of this scene, consisting only of twenty six lines, all naturally resulting from the agitations of a mind anxiously inquiring into the truth of that which it dreads to know ! Even the under character, Salisbury, is called upon, by the words of Constance, to express the different passions of his mind by variety as well as justness of action ; as in the following lines :

What dost thou mean by shaking of thy head ?

Why dost thou look so sadly on my son ?

What means that hand upon that breast of thine ?

Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum ?

Be these sad sighs confirmers of thy words ?

Lady Constance's passionate effusion of rage, grief, and indignation, from which scarce a line or thought can be expunged, to his eternal disgrace, Cibber has either entirely suppressed, or wretchedly spoiled, by vile
and

and degrading interpolations: nay, the whole scene is so deformed and mutilated, that little of the creative power of Shakspeare is to be seen in it.

To utter, with the utmost harmony and propriety, all the succeeding changes of grief, anger, resentment, rage, despondency, reviving courage, and animated defiance, incidental to Lady Constance, and to accompany them with correspondent propriety and vehemence of action, was a happiness only known to Mrs. Cibber. Mrs. Hallam wanted not spirit nor pathos in this part; nor would Mrs. Pritchard have fallen so below herself, if Cibber had not misled her. To speak the truth, Mrs. Cibber has had no successor in this part but Mrs. Yates, who yet, it must be confessed, notwithstanding her great and justly-applauded skill, is inferior.

When Mrs. Cibber threw herself on the ground in pronouncing

———Here I and sorrow sit:

Here is my throne, let kings come bow to it.

Her voice, look, and person, in every limb, seemed to be animated with the true spirit which the author had infused into her character.

And yet I remember, when Cibber's King John was in rehearsal at Drury-Lane theatre, so little was the merit of Mrs. Cibber known to the world, that, in opposition to her, a party was formed in favour of Mrs. Butler, the original actress of Millwood, in Barnwell, who was said to be an illegitimate daughter of a noble duke whose monument is erected in Westminster-abbey. Nay, when the original play was afterwards revived in 1744, at the same theatre, in opposition to Cibber's Papal Tyranny, Mr. Garrick was so little acquainted with the genuine powers of this charming Melpomene, that, accidentally meeting Mr. Quin at the Bedford Coffee-house, he told him he doubted of Mrs. Cibber's being able to do justice to so vigorous and trying a part as Lady Constance: Quin thought otherwise; and said to him,
with

with some warmth, ' Don't tell me, Mr. Garrick, *that woman has a heart, and can do any thing where passion is required.*'

LADY CONSTANCE.

What hath this day deserv'd? What hath it done?
That it in golden letters should be set
Among the high tides in the calendar?

High tides Mr. Malone cannot suppose is used by the poet as synonymous to what Mr. Steevens very properly alledges they are, solemn seasons: Mr. Malone did not reflect that high tides bear a very different meaning from his intention. They are marks of ruin and desolation, not of prosperity and festivity; and, I believe, are oftener found in chronological tables than in the rubric of a calendar.

LADY CONSTANCE.

O Lymoges, O Austria, thou dost shame
That bloody spoil: thou slave, thou wretch, thou
coward! &c.

This vehement charge of perfidy, cowardice, perjury, and every species of villany, which is concluded with the most stinging reproach and contemptuous raillery, re-

quires the utmost skill of the speaker. Mrs. Cibber's voice was so happily modulated by a most accurate ear, that every material word in this uncommon burst of indignation, was impressed so judiciously and harmoniously upon the audience, that they could not refrain a loud and repeated testimony of their approbation. But part of the pleasure to be obtained from this scene must be owing to the corresponding behaviour of Austria; if he does not contribute to the general deception by feeling the reproaches of Constance, the vigour of the sentiments will be weakened, and the intention of the author disappointed. The character of Austria is very unamiable; and Mrs. Cibber, when the play was first in rehearsal, could not easily prevail on Winstone to make Austria appear as odious to an audience as he ought. Winstone was an actor of singular skill in two or three parts: he was as honest and awkward a country booby in John Moody, in the Provoked Husband, as the author designed

designed him ; and, in Ben Johnson's Downright, he made an excellent grotesque picture of abrupt plain-dealing and unfashionable simplicity. He had the good fortune to gain a considerable sum of money in a lottery about thirty years since, and retired to live on an estate which he purchased in Monmouthshire. But it was impossible for any man long to resist the persuasive manner of Mrs. Cibber. Winstone fully answered her idea of Austria's character.

KING PHILIP.

Here comes the holy legate of the pope.

The character of Pandulph has not, as yet, been represented with that dignity and importance which it demands.

Macklin, whose skill in acting is acknowledged to be superior to that of any man, who is the best teacher of the art, and is still, at a very advanced age, a powerful comedian, as well as a good comic writer, should have refused this part ; neither his person, voice, action, or deportment, conveyed any idea of a great

delegate from the head of the church, or the spiritual monarch of Christendom. Quin, who was present at the revival of King John at Drury-lane, said Macklin was like a cardinal who had been formerly a parish-clerk. And yet, it must be owned, Macklin understood the logic of the part, if I may be allowed the expression, better than any body. But the man, who presumes to controul the will of mighty monarchs, should have a person which bespeaks authority, a look commanding respect, graceful action, and majestic deportment. But Colley Cibber's Pandulph was less agreeable to an audience than Macklin's; the voice of the latter, though rough, was audible. The former's pipe was ever powerless, and now, through old age, so weak, that his words were rendered inarticulate. His manner of speaking was much applauded by some, and by others as greatly disliked, in the Pope's Legate, as in most of his tragic characters. The unnatural swelling of his words displeased all
who

who preferred natural elocution to artificial cadence. The old man was continually advising Mrs. Pritchard, who acted Lady Constance, to *tone* her words ; but she, by obeying her own feelings and listening to her own judgement, gained approbation and applause ; which was not the case with his son Theophilus, who acted the Dauphin, and Mrs. Bellamy, who played Lady Blanch. They, by obeying their director's precepts, were most severely exploded. But Colley's deportment was, I think, as disgusting as his utterance. He affected a stately magnificent tread, a supercilious aspect, with lofty and extravagant action, which he displayed by waving up and down a roll of parchment in his right hand ; in short, his whole behaviour was so starchy studied, that it appeared eminently insignificant, and more resembling his own Lord Foppington than a great and dignified churchman.

P A N D U L P H.

—— — And force per force
Keep Stephen Langton, chosen archbishop
Of Canterbury, from that holy see.

Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, deserves to be held in everlasting remembrance by all Englishmen ; to this generous and wise prelate we are more indebted than, perhaps, to any of the associated barons, who obliged King John to sign the great charter of our liberties. Langton is a proof that every man of sense will be independent if he can ; for, notwithstanding he owed his advancement to the see of Canterbury to the pope, as soon as ever it was in his power, he became a strenuous opposer of all measures which tended to subject the crown of England to a foreign potentate. All the copies of Henry the First's great charter, which had been lodged in the capitularies of religious houses, were lost, and it is supposed that King John had made away with them. Langton, by diligence or accident, found
one ;

one ; and this was made the ground-work of the new charter : but Langton had paved the way for this noble establishment of rights, by inserting, in the oath taken by the king, when he absolved him, the following article, “ That he would re-establish the good laws of King Edward the Confessor ;” laws, which Hume, in the earlier part of his history, seems to overlook or undervalue, though, in his reign of John, he acknowledges their excellence.

KING JOHN.

Though you and all the kings of Christendom
Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,
Dreading the curse that money may buy out,
And, by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,
Purchase corrupted pardon of a man,
Who in that sale sells pardon from himself, &c.

From this and the former speech of King John to the legate, many good Protestants, and, amongst the rest, Colley Cibber, have brought ample proofs to discredit the belief of Shakspeare's being a Roman Catholic, which seems to have taken its rise from the description of purgatory by
the

the ghost in Hamlet. Shakspere's contempt of the fopperies and corruptions of Rome, may be found in more places of his works than this, and particularly in his Henry VIII.

In uttering the resolute answer of John to the legate, Garrick's fire and spirit were conspicuous; but, I think, from his deficiency of person, that it did not produce so strong an effect as the dignified figure and weighty eloquence of Quin, or the energetic utterance of Mossop.

A U S T R I A.

Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these wrongs,
Because——

The person who acted Austria, on the revival of King John at Covent-Garden, in 1736, was one Boman, a dyer. This actor, in answering Falconbridge's repeated insult of

Hang a calf-skin on those recreant limbs,
whether through ignorance, haste, or
chance, instead of uttering the reply to
Falconbridge

Falconbridge as he ought,—with a loud vulgar tone, pronounced it thus :

Well, *ruffian*, I must *pockut* up these wrongs,
Because——

The audience did not observe the impropriety ; but Walker, in the *Bastard*, by changing the word *breacher* to *pockut*, imitated Boman's manner, look, action, and tone of voice, so archly and humourously, that he threw the audience into as merry a fit as ever Quick, or Parsons, or any actor, ever did, in the most comic situation : they were absolutely convulsed with laughter for a minute or two, and gave such loud applause to Walker, that poor Boman was thunderstruck. In plain truth, Boman, though a jolly companion, a writer of Bacchanalian songs, the author of a play never acted, and a very honest man, was very deficient in the profession of acting. He retired from the stage soon after, and filled the place of superintendant to a brewhouse with becoming dignity.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IV.

Prince Arthur's age ascertained.—The Roman youth did not become warriors so early as the knights in the days of chivalry.—Arthur besieges Queen Eleanor.—Battle of Mirabel. — John endeavours to win his nephew to his interest.—Scene between Hubert and the king, who tempts him to murder Arthur, compared to one in Massinger's Duke of Milan.—Colley Cibber's presumption.—Astonishing power of sound, from Dante's Inferno.—Mrs. Cibber's great excellence in Lady Constance.—The merits of Quin, Garrick, Mossop, and Sheridan, in the celebrated scene between Hubert and John.—Garrick extolled.—Rumney's opinion of Æschylus.—Shakspeare the poet of painters.—Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. West, and Mr. Penny.—Anecdote of Quin and Bridgwater.—A discussion of John's guilt in the murder of Arthur. — Strange inattention of an audience to a beautiful actress.

THOUGH

THOUGH it cannot be doubted that Shakspeare had perused the chronicles of King John's reign, at least those of Hollingshead, yet, in drawing his portrait of Arthur, he has closely followed the old play; in which, he is represented to be a child of about ten or eleven years old; this circumstance, he knew, would make those scenes, in which Arthur and Lady Constance are introduced, more pathetic and distressful. But the prince was, at this time, in the sixteenth or seventeenth year of his age, and had given, before his captivity, many signal proofs of valour. Though the Roman youth did not assume the manly habit till the seventeenth year of their age, the noble spirit of chivalry inspired her sons with an earlier ardour for the field. It was not an uncommon sight to behold a young knight at the age of fourteen, clad in complete armour, mounting his steed, and rushing to the battle. Prince Henry, son of Henry IV. fought bravely at the battle of Shrewsbury, when
in

in the fifteenth year of his age; and, though wounded, refused to retire from the field. The same prince Henry had been knighted by King Richard II. three years before, for the proofs he gave of his prowess in Ireland.

Arthur had been knighted by Philip, and presented by him with certain territories in the Poictevin, with the view of detaching him for ever from the interest of his uncle King John.

One of the young prince's first enterprises, after receiving this honour, was besieging his grandmother Queen Eleanor in the town of Mirabel; the siege was so closely pressed, that the Queen was obliged to retire into the castle; John, hearing of his mother's danger, hastened with an army to her relief. An obstinate battle was fought between the royalists and the besiegers, in which the king was victorious: Arthur and a great number of his followers were taken prisoners. John was so elated at this unexpected good fortune, that he wrote to his barons a particular and very exulting account
of

of his success, in terms not unlike those we read of in a letter from a modern victorious monarch to his ministers of state, commanding them to give God thanks and rejoice at his success. The king endeavoured, by all manner of soothing arts, to win over his nephew to his party, by setting forth to him the mighty advantages of his compliance; but the young inexperienced prince not only treated his uncle's offers of friendship with disdain, but imprudently insisted upon his restoring to him the crown of England, which he had usurped. And the writer of the old play puts into the mouth of Arthur, when he is requested by his uncle to depend upon him,

A R T H U R.

Might hath prevailed, not right; for I

Am king of England, though you wear the diadem.

Upon this behaviour of Arthur, John confined him in the castle of Falaise.

K I N G.

See thou shake the bags of hoarding abbots.

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In

In that play there is a ridiculous scene, where Falconbridge, in the rifling of a convent, calls upon a frier to open his chests and produce his treasure : he obeys, and, in the unlocking of one of them, a most beautiful nun unexpectedly jumps out : she promises to open another chest, where abundance of real treasure was to be found ; but, upon the unlocking of one, a lusty frier proves to be the promised gold. This farcical scene, which Shakspeare has judiciously avoided, must have entertained the audience at a time when the Reformation was newly established on the ruins of Popery.

I do not recollect a third act, in any tragedy of Shakspeare, so rich in scenes, where pity and terror distress the soul of man, and govern it by turns with equal influence, as this of King John. The interview between John and Hubert, where the king solicits Hubert, more by looks and action than by words, to murder his nephew Arthur, is, in the opinion of every

very man of taste, superior to all praise. A late editor of Massinger has indeed called upon the reader of a scene between Sforza and Francisco, in the Duke of Milan, to compare it with this between John and Hubert, and boldly appeals to his judgement for the decision.

The scene in Massinger is well conceived and highly finished; but the lightning itself is not brighter or quicker in its flash, nor more astonishing in its effects, than the sublime and penetrating strokes of Shakspeare. In Massinger, eloquent language and unbroken periods give easy assistance to the speaker, and calm and undisturbed pleasure to the hearer: In Shakspeare, the abrupt hints, half-spoken meanings, hesitating pauses, passionate interruptions, and guilty looks, require the utmost skill of the actors while they alarm and terrify the spectator.

From Colley Cibber's long experience, and perfect knowledge of the stage, we might have expected that he would have

considered this scene as a sacred thing, and have given consequence to his Papal Tyranny by transcribing it whole and untouched. But Colley's confidence in his abilities was extreme; and he has not only mixed his cold crudities and prosaic offals with the rich food of Shakspeare, but has presumed to alter the œconomy of the scene by superfluous incident: for John desires Hubert to draw the curtain, that he may unfold his meaning to him in the dark; and Hubert exacts an exculpatory warrant from him to put Arthur to death. In this latter management he has borrowed from Massinger. Francisco demands from Sforza a writing, signed by him, to warrant the putting Marcelia to death.

KING JOHN.

———If the midnight-bell

Did, with his iron tongue and brazen mouth,
Sound *one* unto the drowsy race of night.

Mr. Steevens, after having formerly espoused the old reading of "Sound *on* unto," &c. very candidly doubts the strength of
his

his argument, and with greater probability supposes that *one* single notice of a bell is more apposite to the purpose of the king.

There is not, in all poetry, perhaps, a greater instance of the astonishing and sublime effect of sound, produced by a single word, than in Dante's *Inferno*.

*The awful sentence of the Judge, in the last great day, says that author, will sound for ever in the ears of the damned**. This he expresses by RIMBOMBA in *Æternum*.

The several actors of John, in this scene, had their different and appropriated shares of merit. Quin's voice and manner of acting were well adapted to the situation and business of it. His solemn and articulate whisperings were like soft notes in music, which summon our deepest attention; but, whether the action did not correspond with the words, or the look did not assist the speech and action, the effect was not perfectly produced. If ever Garrick's quick intelligence of eye and varied

E 3

action

* Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels. Matthew xxv. 41.

action failed him, it was here. Through the whole scene, his art was too visible and glaring ; his inclination and fear were not equally suspended ; the hesitations of a man big with murder and death were not happily and sublimely expressed.

Of Mossop, justice requires me to say, that he was nearer in feeling the throes of a guilty mind, and in conveying them to his auditors, than either Quin or Garrick. In my memoirs of Mr. Garrick, I have endeavoured, though faintly, to do justice to the skill of Mr. Sheridan, who, in this scene, bore away the palm from all competitors.

L A D Y C O N S T A N C E.

No! I desire all comfort! all redress!

The grief, anguish, and despair, of a mother, are no where so naturally conceived and so pathetically expressed, as in the Constance of Shakspeare. The Clytemnestra, Hecuba, and Andromache, of Euripides, though justly admired characters, have not those affecting touches, those heart-rending

rending exclamations of maternal distress, with which Constance melts the audience into tears. The modern imitations of the ancients are still more feeble. Nor can Cræusa or Merope approach the sublime pathos of our inimitable poet.

L A D Y C O N S T A N C E.

Oh amiable lovely death!—

This noble apostrophe to death is superior to that fine invocation of the chorus in the Suppliants of Æschylus to the same power.

O thou, assigned the wretch's friend,
To bid his miseries end,
And in oblivion's balm to steep his woe,
Come, gentle death, ere that sad hour
Which drags me to the nuptial bed,
And let me find, in thy soft power,
A refuge from the force I dread.

POTTER'S ÆSCHYLUS.

I have already taken notice of Mrs. Ciber's uncommon excellence in Constance. It was indeed her most perfect character. When going off the stage, in this scene, she uttered the words,

O Lord! my boy!

E 4

with

with such an emphatical scream of agony, as will never be forgotten by those who heard her.

This admirable actress, during the representation of this tragedy at Covent-Garden Theatre, about the year 1750, was suddenly taken ill. The play was, however, announced in the bills. Mrs. Woffington, who was ever ready to shew her respect to the public and her willingness to promote the interest of her employer, came forward to the front of the pit, ready dressed for the character of Constance, and offered, with the permission of the audience, to supply Mrs. Cibber's place for that night. The spectators, instead of meeting her address with approbation, seemed to be entirely lost in surprize. This unexpected reception so embarrassed her, that she was preparing to retire; when Ryan, who thought they only wanted a hint to rouse them from their insensibility, asked them bluntly if they
would

would give Mrs. Woffington leave to act Lady Constance? The audience, as if at once awakened from a fit of lethargy, by repeated plaudits strove to make amends for their inattention to the most beautiful woman that ever adorned a theatre.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER V.

Affecting interview of Hubert and Arthur.—Who first introduced the practice of burning out eyes in England.—Good effects of the Great Charter.—Humanity of an executioner.—Marlow, in the story of John, nearer to history than Shakspeare.—Hubert overcome by Arthur.—Marlow a competitor with Shakspeare.—Passage from Marlow.—Passions of the audience during the scene between Arthur and Hubert.—King John crowned four times.—Method of doing homage.—The king's apprehensions.—Scene of recrimination.—The several actors of John compared.—Shakspeare the poet of painters.—Actors of Hubert's character described.—Anecdote of Quin and Bridgwater.—Discussion of John's guilt respecting the death of Arthur.

THE interview between Arthur and Hubert, in the fourth act, involves a subject so terrible to the imagination, that

that it requires more than common skill and delicacy, in the writer, to treat it in such a manner as neither to shock the reader, nor fill the spectator with horror. The custom of putting out a person's eyes was unknown to our British, Saxon, and, I believe, our Danish, ancestors. The cruel practice of burning out the eye was introduced by William the Conqueror. That royal ruffian, (I cannot afford him a softer name,) we are assured by historians, punished the killing of a boar, a deer, or even a hare, in his own forests, (which were so widely extended that they contained almost a twelfth part of the kingdom,) with the loss of the offender's eyes. The immediate successors of this tyrant did not abolish this inhuman practice. The great charter, extorted from John by his barons, contributed to make man more placid and humane, as well as generous and free.

Shakspeare has generally not only adhered to the plot of the old play, but has
borrowed

borrowed several sentiments from it. We may safely trust to the opinion of the accurate and industrious Mr. Malone, who supposes Marlow to have been the author; for the versification of the old play resembles his more than that of any other writer. He has certainly more closely followed history than Shakspeare; but I am convinced that he also had read the same historian; for the speech of the executioner, who declares himself well pleased to be absent from the murder of Prince Arthur, is judiciously borrowed from a passage in Hollingshead. John, having determined, for obvious reasons, to put his nephew to death, tampered with certain persons, whom he tempted by the hopes of reward, to execute his purpose. Some treated his proposals with disdain and horror: others endeavoured to accomplish the deed. The cries and struggles of the young prince brought Hubert to them; who, having dismissed the ruffians, was prevailed upon, by the tears of the unhappy

happy

happy Arthur, to promise that he would save and protect him. In order to effect this, he gave out that he was dead; and, still better to carry on the deceit, the burial service was performed for him. Thus far the historian.

Notwithstanding that our author, in this scene, unluckily falls into his old fond habit of quibbling and playing upon words, yet the strong pleadings of Arthur, in the natural language of youthful innocence in distress, will touch the heart of every reader. To place Marlow as a competitor to Shakspeare would revolt the mind of any reader; yet, in this scene, he is no contemptible antagonist: the former is more affecting: the latter more eloquent. Some lines in Arthur's speech to Hubert, after reading the warrant for his death, ought not to be lost:

A R T H U R.

Heaven weeps, the fountains shed celestial tears;
 They fear *thy fall*, and cite thee with remorse:
 They knock thy conscience, moving pity there,
 Willing

Willing to fence thee from the rage of hell :
 Hell ! Hubert ! Trust me, all the plagues of hell
 Hang on the performance of this damned deed !
 This seal, the warrant of the body's bliss,
 Insureth Satan chieftain of thy soul.
 Subscribe not, Hubert ! Give not God's part away !
 I speak not only for my eyes privilege,
 The chief exterior that I would enjoy ;
 But for thy peril, far beyond my pain,
 Thy sweet soul's loss, more than my eyes lack,
 A cause internal and eternal too :
 Advise thee, Hubert, for the case is hard
 To lose salvation for a king's reward.

Hubert not seeming to be moved, Arthur submits, and bids him obey his orders ; but still endeavours to affect him with an imprecation.

Ye rolling eyes,* whose superficies yet
 I do behold with eyes that nature lent,
 Send forth the terror of your mover's frown
 To wreak my wrongs upon my murderers,
 That rob me of your fair reflecting view.
 Let hell to them, as earth they wish to me,
 Be dark and direful guerdon of their guilt !
 Delay not, Hubert, my orisons are ended ;

Begin,

* Orbs.

Begin, I pray thee, reave me of my sight:
 But to perform a tragedie indeed,
 Conclude the period with a mortal stab!

Colley Cibber has done less injury to Shakspeare; in this scene, than in any other of the play. Nay, it must be confessed, he has heightened the anguish of Hubert by a very fine and affecting incident. This man, after giving a solemn promise to his royal master that he would put his nephew to death, instantly prepares to accomplish the deed; but, as he is going about it, he overhears the prince putting up his prayers to heaven for him. To hear the innocent victim praying for his slaughterer staggers his resolution, and throws him into an agony.

——— He! what is it that I hear!

Distraction to my sense! He prays for me!

For Hubert! who has made his chains sit easy!

And thanks high heaven he has so kind a keeper!

What means this damp reluctance on my brows?

These trembling nerves? This ague in my blood?

It

It had been well if Cibber had stopt here : but he goes on to compare that which will bear no comparison, the stab of the assassin with the wound which the brave man gives and receives in the field of battle. But let me not rob him of any just claim to merit. He puts a thought into the mouth of Arthur, which, though not unobvious, is exceedingly touching, from the situation of the character. Hubert enjoins Arthur to give, under his hand, a formal acknowledgement that his death was voluntary and inflicted by his own hand.

A R T H U R.

Must I do more than die ! O mercy ! mercy !

H U B E R T.

Suppress thy voice, or thou art days in dying.

A R T H U R.

I will, O spare me, Hubert, but a moment !
 But while I call once more on heaven. Indeed
 I'll not be loud, *alas ! I need not there ;*
The softest supplicating sigh is heard in heaven.

The

The passions of the audience, during this terrible scene, are suspended between hope and fear, between apprehension of the prince's death and expectation of Hubert's remorse. It is with pleasure I have observed a thousand melting eyes resume their lustre, when Hubert quits the bloody purpose and embraces the child.

The coronation of John follows.

Weak princes are ever suspicious of the loyalty of their subjects; John, who was conscious of his demerit, resolved to fence himself with the vows and promises of his subjects, by their repeated oaths and acts of allegiance. In this, he manifested more confidence in the integrity of his people than he ought. For he who flagrantly violates his own most solemn adjuration when he is crowned, by which he binds himself to uphold the laws in their full force, and to maintain the rights of his people, emancipates them from their obligations. John was crowned no less than four times; once from the paltry spirit of
F revenge,

revenge against Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, whom he hoped to involve in considerable expence, by the archbishop's incurring the necessary charges attending the ceremony. But the great motive for these frequent coronations and other solemn assemblies was his receiving homage from his vassals, his barons, ecclesiastical and civil ; which was performed in the following manner : seated upon his throne, in his royal robes, with his crown on his head, and surrounded by his spiritual and temporal nobles, the king beheld his greatest prelates and most powerful barons, uncovered and unarmed, upon their knees. In that humble posture, they put both their hands between his, and solemnly promised " To be his liegemen of life and limb, and worldly worship ; to bear faith and truth to him, to live and die with him, against all manner of men."

By this sacred promise, given before all the world, our monarchs imagined they could secure the fidelity and allegiance of those

those whom they determined to injure, persecute, and oppress.

The conduct of the plot, in the fourth act, and especially that part of it which follows the discourse upon the new coronation, is very judicious. The king's supposed security, arising from this ostentatious piece of pageantry, is suddenly shaken to the foundation by the news of Arthur's death, and the strong reproaches and consequent desertion of the barons thereupon. The landing of the French adds to the king's perplexity, which is not diminished by the hermit's prophecy, 'That ere Ascension-day he would give up his crown.' In all the distracted hurry of a man alarmed and terrified, John dispatches Falconbridge after the lords to soothe them, if possible, and bring them to his presence. Hubert, now left alone with the king, endeavours to magnify his apprehensions by prodigies in the heavens, by prophecies, and by urging the universal discontent of

the people, all owing to Arthur's death. This is artfully contrived to reconcile the king to Hubert's breaking his promise in saving the life of the young prince. The upbraidings of John,—who endeavours to apply balm to his own wounded conscience by recrimination on the enormous guilt of his instrument, whom he describes as an ugly monster, formed by nature for acts of villany—Hubert's seizing the proper moment when the king's passion is at an ebb, and restoring his peace by a single word, with an artful, though false, vindication of his own innocence—These are such paintings of the passions, and their operations, on the human mind, as no other writer, ancient or modern, I suppose, was acquainted with.

To enter into a long criticism upon the several merits of the actors who have represented the last masterly scene between the king and Hubert would be tedious and unprofitable. It is not indeed loaded with difficulty, like the former, between the
same

same persons in the third act. There the passions were over-awed, and durst not shew themselves in full day, but sought for a cover in nods and shrugs, fearful looks, disjointed phrases, and broken sentences : here they burst out with the vehemence of a torrent, and Nature is permitted to speak her own language with astonishing rapidity. Those actors who were happy in the best-toned voices, if they had any skill, were sure to excel. Delane and Mossop wanted neither fire nor force to express anger, rage, and resentment, with truth and vigour. Sheridan and Quin, endowed with less power, were obliged to supply that requisite by art. Here Garrick reigned triumphant : he was greatly superior to them all. His action was more animated ; and his quick transitions from one passion to another gave an excellent portrait of the turbulent and distracted mind of John. When Hubert shewed him his warrant for the death of Arthur, saying to him, at the same time,

Here is your hand and seal for what I did,

Garrick snatched the warrant from his hand; and, grasping it hard, in an agony of despair and horror, he threw his eyes to heaven, as if self-convicted of murder, and standing before the great Judge of the quick and dead to answer for the infringement of the divine command! Mr. Rumney, we are told by Dr. Potter, calls *Æschylus* the poet of the painters: *Shakspeare* has surely as just a title to that appellation as any poet, ancient or modern. The tragedy of *King John* would supply the finest materials for displaying the skill of our most eminent painters. The two scenes in the third and fourth act, between *John* and *Hubert*, merit the noble pencil of a *Sir Joshua Reynolds* or a *West*. My friend, *Mr. Penny*, has given the public some valuable paintings from *Shakspeare*, and particularly an exact picture of the smith and the tailor, as described by *Hubert*.

I saw

I saw a smith stand with his hammer thus,
With eager haste swallowing a tailor's news, &c.

Hubert is, by the poet, made a principal agent in the play, and requires no small art in the acting. The several players whom I have seen in Hubert, Bridgwater, Berry, and Bensley, very skilfully displayed the various passions incidental to the part. Quin was so pleased with Bridgwater, (who followed at the same time the different trades of coal-seller and playef,) that, upon going into the Green-room, after the scene in the fourth act, he took him by the hand and thanked him, telling him he was glad that he had drawn his attention from his coal-wharf to the stage; "for sometimes, you know, Bridge, that, in the midst of a scene, you are thinking of measuring out a bushel of coals to some old crone, who you are fearful will never pay you for them."

Arthur's death, by a fall from the walls of Northampton-castle, follows the important scene of Hubert and Arthur. As

the death of this young prince is made of great consequence in the tragedy, it will not be an idle business to enter into a short and impartial discussion of that share of guilt which may be justly imputed to King John, for so atrocious an action as the murder of his nephew.

From the concurring testimony of historians who had the best opportunity to know the truth, it is past doubt that Arthur was either killed by an express order of his uncle, or slain by the king's own hand. Hume, an historian not likely to take things upon trust, and always a ready vindicator of royalty, charges the king himself with the perpetration of the bloody deed; with stabbing him, and then fastening a stone to his body, and throwing it into the river Seine. The report of his dying by a fall from the walls of his prison was, in all probability, spread by John and his agents; and Shakspeare has laid hold of it as an historical incident best suited to his purpose.

All

All writers on this period report, that every body was struck with horror at the inhuman deed; and that, from that moment, the king was detested, and his authority over his people and barons rendered very precarious. The world has ever loudly exclaimed against the wretched John, as the most execrable of men, for this murder. To be well assured that he merited the odium which fell upon him in consequence of the action, we ought to inquire into that predicament in which the king and his nephew stood in relation to each other.

Although the feudal system had admitted the right of inheritance by lineal descent in the greatest part of Europe, it was not so established in England. From the conquest to John, a period of one hundred and forty years, there had been no less than three successions to the crown, without any regard to the right of representation. John's title, as there was no law against him, was as good as Arthur's, and the will
of

of King Richard in his favour rendered it stronger. Besides, the people of England, having acknowledged John for their sovereign, put an end to all farther doubts with respect to his validity of claim. Lady Constance and her son were so well satisfied with John's right to the throne of England, that they both resided for some time in his court. The policy of Philip, king of France, who contrived to alarm the prince and his mother for their safety, caused them to leave England with terror, and to throw themselves under his protection; and this, I believe, was the ruin of Arthur; for Philip had no other intention then to use him as an instrument in his hands to disturb John. The young prince was now become the professed rival of his uncle, a competitor for the crown of England, as well as a claimant of all the dominions which our kings at that time enjoyed in France.

Arthur, when taken prisoner at the battle of Mirabel, was so far from listening to
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the reasonable advice of his uncle, who intreated him to forsake the king of France, and depend upon him, promising, at the same time, to protect him in his due rights to the utmost of his power, that he very imprudently and haughtily put the king to defiance; nay, it is recorded that he was so far transported by passion as to tell his uncle, "That, to the last moment of his life, he would never cease seeking occasion to be revenged of him*." Notwithstanding all this provocation of Arthur, no man will be so daring or wicked as to justify his murder; but sure the case will admit of considerable mitigation.

Queen Isabel, who caused her husband, Edward II. to endure a most painful and shocking death, may be justly charged with much greater aggravation of guilt. So may Henry IV. who deposed, and starved to death, his lawful sovereign, Richard II. So may Richard III. who made away with
his

* Rapin, Life of John.

his nephews, King Edward V. and Richard, duke of York, his brother: yet the clamour against these delinquents has not been so outrageous as that against King John. After all, we may with great probability, in this case, make the same observation as Livy did upon the murder of Cicero by Mark Antony: "That Cicero met with the same fate from Antony, which he would have inflicted upon him if he had fallen into his power*." Arthur's vehement expression of anger and resentment, when a prisoner to John, leaves no room to doubt that he would have gratified his revenge to the height, if his uncle had fallen into his hands.

A Dramatic Miscellany will, I hope, permit such an investigation of fact as relates to a principal character. This, indeed, is one main point I have in view; and it seemed to me more necessary, as I believe John's infamous conduct through
his

* Fragmentum Livii, tom. ult. ad fin.

his whole reign has hitherto been the cause why the question of Arthur's death has not been more nearly and impartially scrutinized.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER VI.

The nobles revolt to Louis, Dauphin of France.

—*Falconbridge viewing the dead body of Arthur.* — *Variety of action exacted by Shakspeare.*—*Beautiful image in a speech of Falconbridge.* — *Remorse explained.*—*Meaning of true defence, and Do not prove me so.*—*Garrick, in look and action, inferior to Tom Walker.* *Different descriptions of the Devil.* *Hubert's character not so odious as represented in the play.* — *Noble imagery in a speech of Falconbridge.*—*Meaning of unowed interest.*—*The raven's bone.* —*Meaning of the word England.*

THE remainder of the fourth act is employed by the poet to quicken the revolt of the peers and their junction with Louis the dauphin, who claims the kingdom in right of his wife on the failure of Arthur. The sight of Arthur's dead body confirms the barons in their resolution of joining their forces to the dauphin.

phin. Falconbridge, with his usual intrepidity, pleads the cause of the king; but is struck with astonishment when the dead body is exposed to his view. His attitude of silent grief and surprise is well implied by Salisbury's questions.

SALISBURY.

Sir Richard, what think you? Have you beheld,
Or have you read or heard? Or could you think?
Or do you almost think, although you see,
That you do see? Could thought without this object
Form such another?

By these several interrogatories, which Falconbridge is in no haste to answer, the reader will see what variety of action Shakespeare exacts from the actors of his principal characters, and what opportunities he gives to the masters of their profession to display their abilities. After a long pause, the noble passion of Falconbridge breaks forth, and he calls the deed by its proper name.

FALCONBRIDGE.

It is a damned and a bloody work.

SALISBURY.

S A L I S B U R Y.

This is the bloodiest shame,
 The wildest savagery, the vilest stroke,
 That ever wall-eye'd wrath or staring rage
 Presented to the tears of fest remorse.

This image is exceedingly beautiful : but the word *remorse* does not, in this place, mean sincere penitence for past crimes or rash actions, but is a term, not unusual with our author, to signify deep sorrow or violent affliction, independently of remorse arising from guilt. Hubert is charged with the murder of the prince ; Salisbury draws his sword upon him ; and Hubert, standing upon the defensive, makes use of an expression, the meaning of which I understand differently from Shakspeare's best commentator, Dr. Johnson.

H U B E R T.

I would not have you, lord, forget yourself,
 Nor tempt the danger of my true defence.

Dr. Johnson interprets *true defence* honest defence, or defence in a good cause ; and certainly the words will well admit of
 that

that sense : but I am of opinion that, in guarding himself against this attempt upon his life, Hubert rather intended to bring the earl to a sense of his danger, in attacking one who was well skilled in fighting, a brave man and a soldier, able to defend himself by art and strength as well as courage. However, I am not wedded to my opinion.

SALISBURY.

Thou art a murderer.

HUBERT.

Do not prove me so.

“ Do not make me a murderer, says Dr. Johnson, by compelling me to kill you.” I rather believe, “ Do not prove me so,” is as much as to say, Do not bring me to a trial, or to the proof of it ; for the consequence will be, that yourself will be found a slanderer and a liar. I believe the phrase or expression of “ Do not prove me so” is to be found, in this sense, in authors of Shakspeare’s age.

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To prevent a farther fray, Falconbridge interposes between Salisbury and Hubert; and, in this scene, Mr. Garrick, notwithstanding his great power of action, (from the deficiency of person, amongst men who were of a larger size than himself,) rendered the following animated speech of Falconbridge unimportant and inefficient.

SALISBURY.

Stand by, or I shall gall you, Falconbridge.

FALCONBRIDGE.

You had better gall the Devil, Salisbury.

If thou but frown on me, or stir thy foot,

Or teach thy hasty spleen to do me shame,

I'll strike thee dead. —

When Walker uttered these words, he drew his sword, threw himself into a noble attitude, sternly knit his black brows, and gave a loud stamp with his foot; inasmuch that, pleased with the player's commanding look and vehement action, the audience confirmed the energy of his conceptions by their approbation of
applause.

applause. Falconbridge, notwithstanding his defence of Hubert, tells him, as soon as the lords are departed, that he suspects him very grievously ; and farther :

FALCONBRIDGE.

There is not so ugly a fiend of hell,

As thou shalt be, if thou didst kill this child.

Mr. Steevens has a curious note on this passage, from a book printed in the reign of Henry VIII. where we are told that the deformity of the condemned, in the other world, is proportioned to the degrees of guilt in this. But it is from the conception of the speaker that the character of a Devil's ugliness is formed here. With some, one of the largest size, with branching horns, big saucer eyes, and a length of tail is the most deformed and odious. But the brave man defines his Devil by giving him a quantity of spite and malice, of which he supposes him to have a larger share than his brother fiends. So one of Shakspeare's characters, speaking of his hatred to his enemy, says,

I'll fight with him with all the malice
Of an under-fiend.

Hubert's exculpation of himself renders his character odious. Not content with denying the commission of the murder, which he might have honestly done, he says, in express terms,

If I, in act, consent, or sin of thought,
Be guilty of the stealing that sweet breath,
Let hell want pains enough to torture me.

This is a repetition of his impudent affirmation to the king :

Within this bosom never enter'd yet
The dreadful motion of a murderous thought.

Shakspeare has drawn this man, in opposition to all record, in a worse light than he needed to have done. Colley Cibber, on the other hand, causes Falconbridge to stab Hubert, on the accusation of the peers and the sight of the dead body of Arthur, without farther inquiry into his guilt ; and Hubert, dying, owns the justice of his punishment ;

nishment : for, though he did not commit the murder, he declares that he once intended it.

The speech of the Bastard, which concludes the act, is full of that noble imagery peculiar to Shakspeare, and was uttered by Garrick with great force.

I cannot think that Mr. Steevens has hit the sense of *unow'd* interest, in the lines that follow :

——— And England now is left
To tug and scramble, and to part by the teeth
The *unow'd* interest of proud swelling state.

Unow'd interest, says this commentator, is that which has no claimer to own it. But claimers there were, and enough.

By *England* I understand John, who is often so termed by himself, and the king of France, in the second act. In this very speech, Arthur, as rightful heir to the crown, is likewise called *England*.

How easy dost thou take all *England* up !

The king is now forced to fight and struggle for that dominion which he for-

merly enjoyed, but which he does not now, in Shakspeare's phrase, *owe* or possess.

In the same sense the word is used by Iago in Othello.

———— Not poppy nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the East,
Shall med'cine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday.

OTHELLO, Act III.

———— Vast confusion waits,
As doth a raven on a sick-fallen beast,
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.

Ravens and other birds of prey are not only said to hover about the carcasses of dying animals, in order to feast upon them, but to attend the dissection of deer for a certain morsel, which hunters used formerly to call *the raven's bone*.

The following passage is transcribed from Turberville's Book of Hunting, page 135.

There is a little gristle which is upon the spoon of the brisket, which we call the raven's bone, because it is cast up to the crows and ravens which attend hunters; and I have seen, in some places, a raven so accustomed to it, that
she

she would never fail to croak and cry for it all the while you were breaking up the deer, and would not depart till she had it.

The imminent decay of wrested pomp.

Wrested pomp Dr. Johnson explains by greatness obtained by violence. In a more correct writer, it would be so understood, but in Skakspeare's broad and unconfined language, I believe, it is different. The imminent decay of wrested royalty, is the speedy destruction of a king whose power is wrested from him by violence.

CHAPTER VI.

John's resignation of his crown to the pope.—The consequences of an interdict.—Interdict described.—The distress of King John.—He is obliged to resign his crown a second time.—His insensibility of disgrace.—He refuses to grant a charter of liberty.—The pope espouses John's cause against Louis of France, who calls the resignation of his crown voluntary.—Peter of Pomfret's prophecy accomplished.—He and his son executed.—The humour of Falconbridge expires with the disgrace of John.—Salisbury's noble reluctance.—King Philip and his son Louis obliged to undergo penance.—Reason why Shakspeare avoided the subject of the Great Charter.—Garrick's dying scene of John.—Shakspeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher, compared.—Remarkable quotation from The Troublesome Reign of King John.—His character compared.—Why more odious than any other English monarch.—Conjecture concerning

*cerning the original actors of King John,
—particularly Hubert.—Mr. Smith's Fal-
conbridge.*

THE fifth act of this play opens with the most disgraceful event which could possibly befall a crowned head and a great kingdom. A powerful monarch resigning his crown and kingdom into the hands of an imperious priest, and becoming his vassal by holding his dominions from him and paying him an annual tax, was a new and astonishing sight to John's own subjects, and to all the world. Shakspeare has connected this part of John's history with the death of Arthur, concerning whom the king interrogates Falconbridge after the resignation; but, in fact, ten years had elapsed since the murder of Arthur. A series of wicked and tyrannical actions had alienated the barons of the realm and the bulk of the people from John: his quarrel with the pope had involved his subjects in all the miseries of an interdict,

interdict, a papal ordinance which deprived the priest of his functions, and the community of religious worship: the churches were shut up: neither baptism, marriage, nor burial, permitted, except in particular cases and under certain restrictions. I give the reader the description of it in the lines of Cibber, in his *Papal Tyranny*, which agrees pretty exactly with Hume's transcript of that anathema, and, to the eternal shame of the man, called by himself the *Servant of the Servants of God*, who, in a mean struggle with the king for the nomination to a bishopric, deprived a whole kingdom of temporal and eternal happiness, as far as it was in his power. Cibber's lines are not dignified with poetic numbers, but they sufficiently express the pope's malediction.

O never was a state so terrible !
Now all the rights of holy function cease !
Infants unsprinkled want their christian names !
Lovers, in vain betrothed, resume despair,
Nor find a priest to sanctify their vows !

In

In vain the dying sinner groans for pardon !
Even penitence, depriv'd of absolution,
In all the agonies of fear, expires !
Nor after death has at his grave a prayer,
Or for his parted soul a requiem sung.

John was now reduced to the last extremity, hated and deserted by his subjects, threatened with an invasion from France, his kingdom groaning under an interdict, himself excommunicated, and his subjects forbidden, under a curse, to pay him obedience. In this miserable state his only refuge was submission to the pope's mercy ; and this could only be obtained by giving up to him his crown and dignity. Shakspeare seems to have shrunk from the detested subject : he knew the just representation of such an event would be shocking to an English audience, and therefore passes it over with as much celerity as possible.

John says, after delivering his crown into the legate's hands,

Thus

demanded why the barons did not also ask for his dominions? what they desired, he said, is foolish and idle. Then, with an oath, he declared he would never grant them such privileges as would make him a slave. The meaning of which was, that he insisted upon their being bound to obey him in every thing, and himself to be free from all manner of restraint. This conduct of John reduced the barons to the necessity of calling in Louis the dauphin to their assistance; as, in later times, the principal men of the kingdom invited the Prince of Orange to redress the errors of King James's government, and to establish their liberties on a sure foundation.

P A N D U L P H.

But, since you are a gentle convertite —

It is observable that, from the time of John's submission to Rome, the language of that court, respecting him, was greatly altered. He who had been painted, by the pope and his adherents, as an impious monster, stained with the worst of all vices,
and

and more especially with heresy and disobedience to the holy see, was now extolled to the skies as the best of men, and the most religious and pious of all princes.

The word *convertite* is so easily derived from *convert*, that Mr. Steevens needed not to have authenticated it from Marlow. It is no uncommon word with Shakspeare himself: he puts it into the mouth of Jaques in *As you like it*, who wishes to converse with a tyrant turned a penitent and a hermit; for, says he,

———— Out of these *convertites*

There is much matter to be heard and learn'd.

KING JOHN.

Is this Ascension-day? Did not the prophet

Say, that, before Ascension-day at noon,

My crown I should give off? Even so I have.

I did suppose it should be on constraint:

But, Heaven be thank'd! it was but voluntary.

How not by constraint? Did he not reduce himself to the absolute necessity of yielding up his crown? Was there any action less voluntary than this? But Shakspeare,

speare, in drawing the picture of this prince, could not make him more brutal and absurd than he really was. It appears from history, that, though all Englishmen long felt the shame and disgrace of their king's meanness of soul, he himself was the first to forget it; and, though treated by the pope's legate like a beaten slave, he seemed to triumph, because his crown was restored to him on any terms. But the tyrant's ridiculous joy was blended with an act of extreme cruelty: for, though Peter of Pomfret's prophecy was literally fulfilled in John's own opinion, yet this man of blood commanded that he, and his son, who was no-ways concerned in the promulgation of his father's prediction, should both be taken out of prison, where they had been long confined, and hanged, without any trial or farther proof; which unmerciful sentence was immediately executed.

Such heavy disgrace and dark melancholy hang over the gloomy transactions
of

of John, that Shakspeare cannot, even with the unremitting spirit of a Falconbridge, enliven the dismal scene.

His speech to John, beginning with

—Wherefore do you droop? Why look you sad?
Be great in act as you have been in thought, &c.

is full of that noble ardor with which the genius of Shakspeare inspires this favourite character. But it is observable, although Falconbridge retains his gallantry to the last, that, after the murder of Arthur and the resignation of John, he drops his vein of humour: John himself, after his abject submission to the pope, becomes lifeless and desponding.

In some of Shakspeare's historical plays, the last act is not supported with the same vigour as those which precede. King John is constantly supplied with dramatic fuel, which blazes brightly to the end. The scenes between Louis and Salisbury, and Pandulph and Louis, are made important by interesting business. The character of

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an English nobleman, reduced by the outrage of tyranny to draw his sword against his sovereign, displays a warm picture of patriotism, of gallantry, and tenderness. Louis, in contemning the threats of the cardinal, appears a man of courage and a politician.

D A U P H I N.

And come you now to tell me John hath made
His peace with Rome? What is that peace to me?

After John's submission to the pope, historians tell us that the legate threatened King Philip and his son Louis with excommunication if they did not resign their pretensions to, and immediately withdraw their forces from, England; for that kingdom, he said, was now become a fief of the holy see. Notwithstanding the spirited opposition of Louis and his father King Philip, they were obliged to submit to the pope; who, not satisfied with this compliance, exacted a disgraceful penance from them; and even with this last mortifying injunction of papal authority they were obliged

obliged to comply. Superstition had, in those days, a strong hold on the minds of the people. Great was the awe of the priesthood. Altars, relics, and miracles, supposed to be wrought at the shrine of St. Thomas-a-Becket, and other such saints, were held in the greatest veneration. They made an equal impression on all ranks of people, and had more effect on their passions than law, reason, and humanity. It was, perhaps, well for mankind that such was the power of bigotry and superstition. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that our hard-hearted kings and their savage barons had been *esprits forts*, or modern free-thinkers ! what would have been the lot of the common people, who at that time, in all parts of Europe, were little better than slaves ?

The sudden entrance of Falconbridge is abrupt, and, with two or three lively strictures upon French courage, has rather too much noise and parade ; but his reproach to

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the English revolvers is keen and farcistical.

B A S T A R D.

Their thimbles into armed gauntlets change ;
Their needs to lances——

The word *need* is still used by the common people in Shropshire.

In the speech of Salisbury, in this act, and I think no where else through the play, does the author hint at the true cause of the great quarrel between John and his barons

—— ——— Such is the infection of the time,
That, for the health and physic of our right,
We cannot deal but with the very hand
Of stern injustice and confused wrong.

The murder of Arthur was not the cause of this contest ; for the death of that young prince could not be a reasonable pretence to dissolve the bonds of allegiance between king and subject. The scene I am speaking of, in order of time, was after the king had signed the Great Charter with his barons, and sworn to maintain all its articles and covenants : his resolution

to

to break through his most solemn engagements, manifested by his invading the estates of his nobles, drove them into the arms of France.

Mr. Pennant, in his tour through Scotland, records an anecdote which will give my readers a just idea of the estimation in which John was held by his subjects. "When the king was in his progress northwards, to lay waste the lands of the nobility who had been the most active to compel him to sign the Great Charter of Liberty, the inhabitants of Morpeth, as soon as he approached the place, (so odious had he rendered himself,) rather than give entertainment to him and his forces, set fire to their houses, and consumed the town to ashes." Pennant's Tour to Scotland.

It may be asked, perhaps, for what reason Shakspeare did not embrace an occasion so fairly given in the choice of the subject, to bring the great question of liberty upon the stage, by introducing the grand

dispute between the king and kingdom. The subject is glorious, and the pen of Shakspeare would have adorned it. But the poet produced his *King John* in the days of prerogative, in an æra too, when prerogative was popular. It was at that remarkable period when the power of the crown was at its height, and at the same time the prince was beloved, nay adored, by the people: a people made happy by a wise and steady administration of government, under a renowned and universally-admired queen.

In a battle excursion, John and Hubert prepare the reader, by the sickness of the king, for the close of the tragedy. These short scenes are of real importance, though often neglected by actors of some merit, because not attended with expected applause. It was the great excellence of Garrick to hold in remembrance the character he played, through all its various stages. No situation of it whatever was neglected by him. By his extreme earnestness to appear always
what

what he ought to be, he roused the audience to a correspondent approbation of his action. In this dialogue with Hubert, Garrick's look, walk, and speech, confessed the man broken with incessant anxiety, and diseased both in body and mind. Despair and death seemed to hover round him.

The discovery of Louis's treachery, by Melun, to Salisbury and others, puts an end to the revolt of the English peers, who return to the king.

An emendation of Theobald, in a line spoken by Melun, deserves notice. Instead of,

Unthread the rude eye of rebellion,

he proposes to read,

Untread the rude way of rebellion.

Mr. Steevens justifies the old reading by a parallel passage in Lear, spoken by Regan to Gloster.

Threading dark-ey'd night.

And yet it must be confessed that Theobald's conjecture seems to be supported by

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a line

a line of Salisbury in this very scene :

We will *untread* the *steps* of damned flight.

After all, Shakspeare seems fond of introducing the word *eye* on many occasions ; as *the eye of death, he turned an eye of death upon me, my mind's eye, &c.* Unthread the rude eye of rebellion, may probably mean clearing the eye-sight of rebellion from all film or extraneous matter, so that it may see the path to duty with perspicuity.

The last Scene.

Shakspeare has, in relating the death of the king, followed Caxton's Chronicle and the old play, though several historians attribute his demise to a violent fever, occasioned by the loss of all his baggage in the Lincoln marshes, and his indiscreet and greedy eating of peaches to quench his thirst.* The poisoning of John at Swin-

sted-

* Speed, from various authors, charges the monks with poisoning John ; and quotes, in proof of it, a saying of Henry III. his son and successor, to the abbot of Clerkenwell — “ Mean you to turn me out of the kingdom, and afterward to murder me, as my father was dealt with ? ”

sted-abbey presented to the poet's mind an interesting scene of pity and terror. In this he has copied an idea of Marlow, if we suppose him to be the author of the old play.

KING JOHN.

Philip, some drink. Oh ! for the frozen Alps,
To tumble on and cool this inward heat
That rageth as a furnace seven-fold hot.

Mr. Seward, in the preface to his edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, prefers the poisoning of Alphonso, in their play of *A wife for a month*, to Shakspeare's scene of *King John*.

The merit of that scene is great ; but the authors have surely said more than was necessary. It is true, their images correspond with the subject, and their lines in general are worked up to great perfection : but the situation would not admit of such prolixity, or such nice descriptions of heat and cold, with their several attributes. Shakspeare knew human nature better than these his imitators and envious rivals. He
knew

knew where to stop. Their heads were at work, while his heart was busy in its feelings.

One speech of Alphonso, in *The Maid for a Month*, and another from Shakspere's *John*, will perhaps convince the reader that I do not wrong the celebrated dramatic twins.

Wife for a Month.

ALPHONSO.

Give me more air, air, more air ; blow, blow !
 Open, thou eastern gate, and blow upon me !
 Distil thy cold dews, O thou icy moon,
 And, rivers, run through my afflicted spirit !
 I am all fire, fire, fire ! The raging dog-star
 Reigns in my blood ! Oh ! which way shall I turn me ?
 Ætna and all his flames burn in my head.
 Fling me into the ocean, or I perish.
 Dig, dig, dig, till the springs fly up ;
 The cold, cold, springs, that I may leap into 'em,
 And bathe my scorch'd limbs in their purling pleasures.
 Or shoot me up into the higher region,
 Where treasures of delicious snow are nourish'd,
 And banquets of sweet hail !

King

King John.

PRINCE HENRY.

How fares your majesty ?

JOHN.

Poison'd — ill-fare ! dead ! forsook ! cast off !
 And none of you will bid the winter come,
 To thrust his icy fingers in my maw ;
 Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course
 Through my burn'd bosom, nor intreat the North
 To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips,
 And comfort me with cold.

In this very interesting situation these great scholars and polished gentlemen make Alphonso a satirist, a quibbler, and a toper ; for what shall we say of his desiring the frier to bring Charity to him, that he may hug her ; “ for they say she's cold,”

Infinite cold : devotion cannot warm her.

When he calls for drink, he wishes to have

— All the worthy drunkards of the time,
 The experienc'd drunkards ? Let me have them all,
 And let them drink their worst : I'll make them idiots.

This

This is not the language of a man in extreme pain. There is, in the old play, a speech of John whilst in his dying agony, written with no common power, in which the author displays the real character of John, and more agreeably to historical information than what we find in Shakspeare himself; who, perhaps, from superior judgement, threw into shade some of the worst of his qualities. The lines are, I think, worth preserving.

Methinks I see a catalogue of sin,
 Wrote by a fiend in marble characters;
 The least enough to lose my part in heav'n.
 Methinks the devil whispers in mine ears,
 And tells me 'tis in vain to hope for grace.
 I must be damn'd for Arthur's sudden death:
 I see, I see, a thousand, thousand, men
 Come to accuse me for my wrongs on earth;
 And there is none so merciful a God
 That will forgive the number of my sins.
 How have I liv'd but by another's loss?
 What have I lov'd but wreck of others' weal?
 Where have I vow'd, and not infring'd mine oath?
 Where have I done a deed deserving well?
 How, what, when, and where, have I bestow'd a day
 That

That tended not to some notorious ill?
My life, replete with rage and tyranny,
Craves little pity for so strange a death.
Why did I 'scape the fury of the French,
And dy'd not by the temper of their swords?
Shameless my life, and shamefully it ends;
Scorn'd by my foes, disdained of my friends.

Black as this portrait is, and stained with various guilt, it does not comprehend all the odious qualities of John. Other princes have been unjust, perfidious, perjured, rapacious, and cruel; but some alloy of virtue, some noble endowments of the mind, contributed to rescue them from utter abhorrence and contempt. John's evil qualities seemed to be unmixed with any good. His courage partook more of brutal violence than heroic gallantry. Equally unfit for the field and the cabinet, his measures for establishing peace, or carrying on war, were so ill-concerted, that he brought infinite disgrace and inevitable mischief on himself and his subjects. Sir Walter Raleigh, in the preface to his History,

tory,

tory, declares it to be his opinion, that, if all the pictures of the cruellest tyrants who ever reigned were lost, and the true portrait of Henry VIII. preserved, they would be all found in him. Sir Walter must have read the reign of King John very inattentively, or he would have better known where to bestow the hateful preference. Henry had many accomplishments and some virtues : John was deficient in all.

When the barons absolutely forced him to renew the Great Charter, granted by Henry I. his great-grandfather, a wise and valiant prince ; the anguish of John's mind, and his behaviour after swearing to perform what he had signed, are not easily to be described. Hollingshead and Stow both assure us, that, on this occasion, he *curfed the hour he was born, the mother that bore him, and the paps that gave him suck ; wishing that he had received death by violence of sword or knife, instead of natural nourishment. He whetted his teeth, and did bite first one staff and then another, as he walked, and oft broke the*

the same into pieces ; with such disordered behaviour and furious gesture he uttered his grief, that the noblemen who were present well perceived the inclinations of his inward affections.

The great cause of his uneasiness shewed the depravity of his mind. By signing the Great Charter he was now become a king over freemen ; whereas, before, he looked upon his subjects as slaves, and treated them as such.

So brutal a character, as King John, Shakspeare was forced to cleanse and qualify, before he durst expose it to public view.

Who were the original actors in this tragedy, it is now impossible to know. If conjecture were of any authority, I should suppose that Burbage, who stands foremost, amongst the comedians of that age, in the list of Shakspeare's, Johnson's, and Beaumont and Fletcher's, principal characters, was the representer of John. I should give the Bastard Falconbridge to Taylor, who was the original Hamlet,
Iago,

Iago, and Paris, in the Roman Actor. By the particular marks of a homely or rather ugly form, given to Hubert by the king, and not denied by himself, I should suspect some deformed Sandford* of that age played that part.

J O H N.

A fellow, by the hand of nature mark'd,
Quoted and signed to do a deed of shame.
—Taking note of thy abhorred aspect, &c.

H U B E R T.

—You have slandered nature in my form;
Which, howsoever rude exteriorly,
Is yet the cover of a fairer mind, &c.

The word *quoted*, occurs several times in Shakspeare, and it is a playhouse word. The characters who are to be called by the prompter's boy to be ready for the scene, are quoted by him in the margin of the play.

I fancy, and it is only a fancy, that Ben Johnson points at this actor in his Poet-after, by the name of Æsop.

C A P-

* An actor much commended in Cibber's Apology.

CAPTAIN TUCCA.

Do not bring your Æsop, your politician,
Unless you can ram up his mouth with cloves.

POETASTER, Act III.

I should not forget to speak of Mr. Garrick's excellence in the dying scene of John. The agonies of a man expiring in a delirium were delineated with such wonderful expression in his countenance, that he impressed uncommon sensations, mixed with terror, on the admiring spectators, who could not refuse the loudest tribute of applause to his inimitable action. Every word of the melancholy news, uttered by Falconbridge, seemed to touch the tender strings of life, till they were quite broken, and he expired before the unwelcome tale was finished.

On the late revival of this tragedy, I should not forget that Mr. Smith exerted himself in the part of Falconbridge with much spirit and gallantry, and to the great satisfaction of the spectators.

I

To

To Cibber's vanity we owe the revival of this excellent tragedy, which had lain in obscurity above one hundred and twenty years.

I think its worth has been rather underrated. Dr. Johnson allows that it is varied with a pleasing interchange of incidents and characters. In the order of Shakspeare's tragedies, I should place it immediately after Othello, Macbeth, Lear, Hamlet, Julius Cæsar, and Romeo and Juliet.

King

King Richard II.

CHAPTER VII.

Reign of Richard divided into three periods.—

Richard II. revived at Covent Garden, in 1738. — The play without a character of humour or pleasantry.—Challenge of Hereford to Norfolk. — Their characters. — Honour of the gauntlet.—Richard obliquely accused of murdering his uncle Gloster. — Truth the great doctrine of chivalry.—The lie given by Charles V. and retorted by Francis I.—Ceremony of Chivalry.—Rynn and Walker.—Lord Rea and Mr. Ramsay. — Explanation of waxen coat.—Conjecture concerning Richard's preventing the single combat of Hereford and Norfolk.—Words dear, and so far as to mine enemy, explained. — Hereford's character and the king's. — Conversation of Richard, Charles II. and Louis XIV.

THE reign of Richard II. may be divided into three periods: the first consisted of that which is called, in our chronicles, the hurling times; when the insurrection of the commons had nearly dissolved all government: about the middle of this reign, the nobles annihilated the power of the crown, and usurped the direction of the state; towards the end, the court and ministry gained the ascendant, and, by various acts of injustice and tyranny, the king was rendered extremely odious to his people; when suddenly a bold usurper snatched the opportunity given him by the general discontent of the people, and mounted the throne without the least opposition. The twenty-two years of Richard's government form a most interesting period in the English history. I shall endeavour to compare the several characters as drawn by the masterly hand of our poet with the authentic testimonies of history.

Though

Though Shakspeare has judiciously confined himself to the latter part of Richard's history, and to those events which brought on his deposition and murder ; he has notwithstanding made use of many happy historical incidents preceding that time, and drawn a variety of characters with strength and veracity ; yet, upon the whole, he has been less happy in this than most of his historical dramas. Though Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone have, from the stationers books, placed this play to the year 1597, I am induced, from its many puerilities, to believe it was a much earlier production.

This play was revived at Covent-Garden in the year 1738 ; and Haynes, the then printer of the *Craftsman*, was prosecuted in the Court of King's Bench, for publishing a letter, in which were contained many strong applications of several passages in it to the ministry, and particularly to Sir Robert Walpole.

Mr. Henley, afterwards Earl of Northington, then a very young barrister, was retained in behalf of Haynes. Amongst other matters, more material for the service of his client, he observed, that Shakspeare's Richard II. was inferior to most of his other tragedies : that, although many beautiful passages might be picked out of it, yet its blemishes were considerable : that it greatly abounded in quibble and play upon words ; and this character is, I believe, not very different from that which Dr. Johnson has given of it.

It is worth our observation, that Shakspeare has, in this play, deserted his usual custom of introducing scenes of pleasantry to contrast with such as are more severe and tragic. Not one gay character is to be found in the whole composition ; and the only part of it which borders upon mirth is Richard's description of Hereford's courting the lowest class of the people.

Act

Act I. Scene II.

BOLINGBROKE.

Now, Thomas Mowbray, do I turn to thee;
Thou art a traitor and a miscreant.

MOWBRAY.

I do defy him and I spit at him;
Call him a slanderous coward and a villain.

The ground of this quarrel between the dukes of Hereford and Norfolk is no where ascertained by our historians. It seems to have proceeded from an accidental conversation, which they fell into on the road as they travelled from Brentford to London. Amongst other topics, the duke of Norfolk is said to have made very free with the character of the king and his mode of government, charging him with arbitrary proceedings, and insinuating that it was unsafe to live under such an administration as the present.

Richard had indeed, according to Hollingshead, so entirely subdued all those he esteemed his enemies, and was become so elated and so very arbitrary, that he threat-

ened all men with death who should presume to oppose his royal will and pleasure. The impression which Norfolk's discourse made on the duke of Hereford was in all probability very different from what the speaker hoped and expected. The ambition of Hereford was regulated by consummate prudence : his great abilities were as unquestionable as his high lineage. He knew that Norfolk had been the king's principal instrument in all his bloody and tyrannical proceedings, and had been employed by him in the murder of the duke of Gloster, his own and Richard's uncle : he therefore, in all probability, considered this confidential discourse as a political train or engine of state, to draw from him certain expressions which might be turned to his destruction : and it is not unlikely that Hereford, by the approbation of his father, John of Gaunt, determined to be beforehand with him and accuse him to the king.

BOLINGBROKE.

Pale trembling coward, there I throw my gage.

The glove was always employed as a gage or earnest of challenging. Segar, in his Discourſe upon Honour, avers, *That he who loſeth his gauntlet in fight is more to be blamed than he who is diſarmed of his powder**: for the gauntlet armeth the hand, without which member no fight can be performed; and therefore that part of armour is commonly ſent in ſign of defiance.

I D E M.

Further I ſay, and further will maintain,
That he did plot the duke of Gloſter's death,
Suggeſt his ſoon believing adverſaries.

That is, he raiſed the duke many enemies by his falſe inventions and baſe inſinuations.

I B I D.

————— Like a traiterous coward,
Spit'd out his innocent ſoul through ſtreams of blood,
Which blood, like ſacrificing Abel's, cries
To me for juſtice and rough chaſtiſment:
And,

* A part of the armour which guards the combatant's ſhoulder.

And, by the glorious worth of my descent,
This arm shall do it, or this life be spent.

Hereford's bold declaration, to punish the man who put to death the duke of Gloucester, could not be pleasing to the king, who knew himself guilty of that murder, by the agency of Norfolk and others. He saw evidently that he was himself struck at by the challenge; and, in the whole scene, Shakspeare has made him an encourager of Norfolk, whose spirits he endeavours to support by a solemn protestation of his impartiality.

R I C H A R D.

He is our subject, Mowbray; so art thou.
Free speech and fearless I to thee allow.

N O R F O L K.

Then, Bolingbroke, as low as to thy heart,
Through the false passage to thy throat, thou liest.

The noblest lesson of chivalry was a strict injunction to a conformity with truth. To this the knight was obliged by his oath to adhere inviolably. The giving the lie was therefore an ignominy which no man of that order could bear without the strongest
resentment,

resentment, and by giving or accepting a challenge. The point of honour, in respect to the lie direct, is still maintained and preserved, as a precious remnant of the institution. Monarchs, however, can dispense even with this; for, about one hundred and thirty years after this contention between Bolingbroke and Norfolk, Charles V. emperor of Germany, and Francis I. king of France, gave and returned the lie to each other, in terms as bitter and brutal as those made use of by the two dukes; and, though the challenge was sent and accepted, yet nothing came of it*.

NORFOLK.

For that my sovereign liege was in my debt

Upon remainder of a dear account

Since last I went to France to fetch his queen.

By *dear account* I understand a demand of debt of a private nature, as stated in the text.

The appeal of Hereford and the answer of Norfolk are taken almost verbatim from

Hol-

* Robertson's Life of Charles V.

Hollingshead's Chronicle. The Parliamentary History has omitted the charge of Norfolk's murdering the duke of Gloster.

Scene III. The Lifts at Coventry.

When this play was revived at the theatre in Covent-garden, above forty years since, the ancient ceremony which belonged to the single combat was very accurately observed, with all the decorations and arrangements proper to the appellant and respondent, the spectators and the judges. Amongst the latter, the king was seated in a throne of state. The combatants were dressed in complete armour. Two chairs, finely adorned, were placed on opposite sides of the lifts : to these they retired after each of them had stood forth and spoken. Bolingbroke was acted by Ryan. Walker personated Mowbray. His helmet was laced so tightly under his chin, that, when he endeavoured to speak, nobody could understand him ; and this obstacle occasioned a laugh from the audience : however, this was soon removed,

removed, and the actor was heard with attention. In their persons, dress, and demeanour, they presented something like an image of the old trial of right by duel.

The last attempt towards a trial of this kind, in the reign of Charles I. was attended with some ridiculous circumstances, which may amuse the reader. Lord Rea accused one Mr. Ramsay of uttering some treasonable expressions. Ramsay denied the charge, and challenged the accuser to single combat, according to the laws of chivalry. The king wished not to revive this dangerous and obsolete custom, and desired the judges to use all legal methods to prevent the trial coming to an issue. Lord Rea, who seems to have had no stomach for the business, petitioned the Court of Honour, that he might be permitted to have counsel with him while in the lists, and a surgeon with his ointments. He was allowed a seat or pavilion to rest himself, and wine for refreshments. He was permitted to have, besides, *iron nails, a hammer,*

hammer, a file, scissars, and a bodkin, with thread and needle. After a few adjournments, the king superseded his commission to the constable and marshal, and thus ended the last of these absurd trials.*

B O L I N B R O K E.

That it may enter Mowbray's waxen coat.

Mr. Steevens has, on this passage, given a curious description of a coat of mail, from some which he had seen in the Tower. But, with submission to so accurate a writer, I beg leave to understand the words, *waxen coat*, in a very different sense. By using these words, Bolingbroke means to express a high and confident opinion of the goodness of his cause, of his own strength and courage, and of the weakness and cowardice of his adversary. As if he had said, "So little do I fear the power of my antagonist, that his coat of mail will, to my lance, be as penetrable as if it were composed of wax." The knights who went
forth

* Rushworth, vol. II.

forth to battle were certainly not better secured and guarded in their armour than those who fought for life and honour in a single combat. Historians have described the former as vulnerable only in the face when a knight lifted up the visor of his helmet ; in the side, at the extremity of the armour ; when he was knocked down, after they had pulled off his coat of mail ; or, in fine, under the arm-pit, when he lifted up his arm to strike. Voltaire, from whose General History I get this information, tells us that Philip Augustus, king of France, at the battle of Bouvines, was knocked off his horse, and for a long time surrounded by the enemy ; who gave him several blows, with various weapons, without his being in the least wounded : so that a knight, completely armed, scarce ran any other risk than being dismounted.

Not one knight, continues this author, was killed in this battle except William Longchamp, who died of a blow levelled through the visor of his helmet.

RICHARD.

Let them lay by their helmets and their spears,
And both retire back to their chairs again.

The hindering of this duel was eventually the cause of the king's deposition and death; nor can it easily be conceived upon what principle of policy he acted. As Richard was not of a compassionate nature, the death of either, or of both, would not have hurt his feelings. In all probability, the plan of banishing both dukes was concerted between the king and his favourites, before the combatants entered the lists at Coventry. The king could not bear the popularity of Hereford, whose eminent personal virtues were a constant reproach to his own imbecillity and worthlessness. By banishing the duke of Norfolk for ever, he got into his own hands all the duke's patrimony, except one thousand pounds *per annum* reserved for his use when abroad. This unjust and impolitic sentence, passed on the combatants, was confirmed by four and twenty commissioners selected from the

the upper and lower houses of parliament, who were chosen to superintend the combat.

KING RICHARD

The dateless limit of thy dear exile.

The word *dear*, in Shakspeare, has various meanings, and very often that which is quite opposite to the general sense of the word. In this place it signifies, *fatal*, *terrible*, or *bateful*. So in Hamlet,

Would I had met my *dearest* foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!

I remember that Ryan was so afraid the audience should mistake Hamlet's meaning, that he always repeated the line thus:

Would I had met my *direst* foe in heaven.

BOLINGBROKE

Norfolk, so far as to mine enemy.

The meaning of this address, from one implacable foe to another, seems to be this — “ Norfolk, the business of the duel is over: however, though I profess myself your enemy, let me now calmly intreat you, as a man and Christian, to disbur-

then your conscience and confess your treason." The expression is simply no more than, "So far as one enemy may speak to another."

G A U N T.

All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are, to a wise man, ports and happy havens.
These lines are evidently borrowed from Ovid.

Omne, viro forti, solum patria.

Soon after the decision at Coventry, the dukes of Hereford and Norfolk went into banishment. Upon reading over the passports of both these noblemen, in Rymer, we see a strong partiality of the king in those granted to Norfolk, and especially in that public act which is called, *De requestu regis ex parte ducis Norfolciæ*. Richard could not do less for the man who seems to have incurred his banishment principally for obeying his illegal orders, and one too whom he had robbed of the greatest part of his estate. Norfolk died, some few years after his banishment, at Venice, universally hated.

RICHARD.

RICHARD.

How he did seem to dive into their hearts,
With humble and familiar courtesy !

In giving this character of Bolingbroke, Richard is justified by the very words which Shakspeare puts into the former's mouth when he was king.

Henry IV. act III. scene between Henry
and the prince of Wales.

And then I stole all courtesy from heav'n,
And dress'd myself in such humility,
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
Loud shouts and salutations from their tongues,
Even in the presence of the crowned king.

Henry then gives his son a very farcastic picture of Richard's behaviour.

The skipping king, he ambled up and down
With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits :
Soon kindled, and soon burnt, &c. &c.

Richard's familiar condescension was too general and too undistinguishing to be esteemed of any worth. He delighted in mean company and licentious conversation. He bore no resemblance to his father and

K 2 grandfather,

grandfather, but was more like his unhappy great-grandfather Edward II. whom our old historians term a *chatterer*. Few men of princely rank understand the art of conversing with their inferiors in a manner that is gracefully condescending; and, for want of this, they often degrade themselves in the opinion of those whose esteem and veneration they want the address to acquire. Henry IV. of France, being exercised in war and adversity from his early youth, and perpetually mixing with all ranks of people, acquired such an easy freedom of conversation and so happy a talent of expression, that he endeared himself to his subjects as much by his affability as his great and illustrious actions. His two grandsons, our Charles II. and Louis XIV. were equally distinguished for excellence in their different styles of conversing. Charles, who loved company, and had none but men of wit constantly about him, was judged to be equal, if not superior, to any of his companions, for the pertinency, as well as
 brilliancy,

brilliancy, of his conversation : his grandfather Henry would sometimes venture to give a rough, or even a coarse, repartee ; but Charles maintained his superiority by never uttering any thing that could displease, or occasion an improper reply. His wit was that of the well-bred and accomplished gentleman. The grandeur of Louis's mind appeared in many sudden effusions of *bons mots*. When a court-lady laughed at the Marshal de Brisac, and loudly declared she never saw so ugly a man in her life, Louis replied " Madam, I differ from you very much ; I think him a very handsome man, for to him I owe many glorious victories." When his grandson Philip set out for Madrid to assume the government of Spain, " Remember, grandson, said Louis, there are now no Pyrenean mountains," the usual boundary of France and Spain.

ACT II. Scene I,

Y O R K.

—Report of fashions in proud Italy,
 Whose manners still our tardy apish nation
 Limps after in base imitation.

Italy, in our author's time, gave the ton of fashion, as France does now, to all Europe. The invectives of Roger Ascham, who in nine days saw more wickedness committed in Italy than in several months in our great metropolis, are ridiculed, with some shew of reason, by Baretti ; but when the same man assures us, from his own knowledge, that the English youth, who returned from their travels in that country to their own, were generally abandoned in principle and dissolute in morals, I cannot help believing him ; but what shall we say too, if Bayle, in the article of Castellan, great almoner to Francis I. and who travelled to Rome sometime before Roger Ascham was in Italy, should confirm all Ascham had said ? Bayle gives the following extract from the life of that prelate
 by

by Gallandus. "I remember that when he was describing the wanton lusts, avarice, and rapacioufness, of the Roman pontiffs, and their contempt of religion ;— the pride, luxury, and laziness, of the cardinals ; their riotous feasting, and other vices, which he had observed in the court of Rome ; he would be so moved with indignation, that, not only the colour of his face, but the very motions and gestures of his body, were changed." Bayle's Dict. Vol. II. p. 371. Lord Chesterfield seems to have been more anxious concerning the morals of Mr. Stanhope when at Rome than in any other part of Europe.

G A U N T.

Against infection and the hand of war.

Dr. Johnson thinks that, by *infection*, the author means that islanders were secure by situation from war and pestilence : not surely from the latter, if they had any intercourse by trade with foreign nations. In this rhapsodical description of England

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by Gaunt, the poet means, I think, to include a particular and exclusive kind of moral happiness. Though we are not exempted from warlike invasions, we are secure from the contamination of such ill habits and vices as are familiar to Italy and other parts of the continent. It is a remarkable observation of Machiavel, "That Italy, France, and Spain, are able to debauch the morals of all mankind beside."

G A U N T.

A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown.

Thy sole merit is having possession of the crown; and that is the charm which attracts thy flatterers, who with their allurements deceive thee to thy ruin.

R I C H A R D.

Thou a lunatic lean-witted fool, &c.

The scene between the dying Gaunt and the king is not borrowed from any chronicle, it is the author's own invention; this great master of Nature takes advantage from Gaunt's recent injury in the banishment of his son and his own desperate sickness,

sickness, to give a keenness to his reproaches which no man in a sedate and unruffled hour of health would have ventured to utter,

GAUNT.

My brother Gloster, plain well-speaking man,
May be a precedent and witness good,
That thou respect'st not spilling Edward's blood.

As the death of the duke of Gloster was eventually the cause of Richard's misfortune more than any thing else, I shall be indulged in speaking a little more at large concerning the quarrel between Richard and the duke, which ended so fatally to them both. Shakspeare, by calling Gloster a plain-spoken man, seems to glance at the very words, which occasioned, perhaps, more than any overt act, the resolution of the king to get rid of him at all events.

Richard had been prevailed upon, for a small sum of money, to restore the town of Brest to the duke of Bretagne. The surrendering a sea-port of such consequence to the French was generally blamed. The duke

duke of Gloster was so particularly displeased, that he reproached his nephew for it in very bitter and taunting terms — “It would become you better, sir, to gain some important place by your prowess, said Gloster, than to surrender to your enemies that which had been subdued by the victorious arms of your ancestors.” The king, says Hollinghead, bade his uncle repeat what he had said. This he complied with, and did not, in the repetition, soften a word which he had spoken before.

After all, the duke was certainly a most ambitious and turbulent man, whom no honours, power, or riches, could gratify. His courage in the field, and readiness to promote any warlike enterprise, had rendered him exceedingly popular and the idol of all military men. By this influence he had, nine years before his death, caused several of the king's ministers to be publicly executed, and reduced the power of the crown to a mere shadow. The in-

significant

significant character of Richard, who was neither a soldier nor a politician, gave this consequence to Gloster; whose temper was so brutal and inflexible, that he refused to spare the life of Sir Simon Burley, though Richard's queen, called *the good queen Anne*, solicited this favour several hours on her knees. Burley had been tutor to the king, and was in high credit with Edward III. and his son the Black Prince. In short, Richard was in the same situation, respecting the duke of Gloster, as Henry III. of France was with the duke of Guise; who was reduced to the necessity of assassinating a man who was become too powerful to be brought to a trial. But, in both cases, the imbecillity of the monarch brought on the necessity.

GAUNT.

And thy unkindness be like crooked age,
To crop at once a too-long-wither'd flower.

Dr. Johnson, not liking the word *age* in the text, proposes *edge* in its stead: and Mr. Steevens bestows a very ingenious note
on

on the figure of Time with a scythe. I cannot help thinking that the meaning of the text, as it stands, is very clear —
 “ Do thou forget all proximity of blood, and become a confederate with my present sickness and the *many infirmities of old age*, to deprive me at once of life.”

. NORTHUMBERLAND.

My liege old Gaunt commends him to you.

There is a splendid ray of greatness, transmitted from history and tradition, still surrounding the name of John of Gaunt, and which to this day commands a kind of awe and reverence. If we examine impartially the character of the duke, we shall find that it but ill corresponds with that celebrity which has attended his memory. I read of no military exploits of Gaunt which could exalt him either to the title of great conqueror or brave soldier. Unlike his father Edward III. or his brother the Black Prince, he seems to have been rather a cautious than an enterprising warrior; and, though no coward, yet he
 thought,

thought, with Falstaff, that discretion was no mean part of valour. The boundless ambition which impelled him to struggle for the crown of Castile, and the title of king, which he carried with him to his grave, did not contribute to make him a better subject. He was the great scourge and persecutor of the commons, whom he laboured to reduce to a state of slavery. He thought, with Dr. Mandeville, that teaching the children of the poor to write and read would be the means of rendering them unfit for service; and therefore insisted, with the rest of his brother tyrants, the barons, *that no poor man's son should be permitted to have any instruction by going to school.* I cannot have a doubt that it was chiefly by his advice Richard was persuaded, when young, to pronounce that most disgusting and shocking answer to the petition of the commons, who prayed to be relieved from vassalage, "*That slaves they were, and slaves they should remain.*"

If

If he merited the honour of favouring Wickliffe and his doctrine, we can scarce attribute this conduct to generous motives; he hated the clergy because they were rich and powerful. But no part of his conduct is more liable to censure than his neglect of his nephew's education, whom he seems, for no good purpose, to have suffered to become the companion of young men whose manners were dissolute and utterly unfit to train him in that discipline which is necessary to form a great prince. The duke of Lancaster was publicly accused of laying a plot to murder the king and usurp the crown. The accuser was put into the custody of Sir John Holland, but he was found dead in his chamber the very night preceding the day on which he was to appear and make good his charge. Stowe's account of this transaction bears hard, I think, upon the duke.

The scene between Richard and Gaunt, on the revival of this play, was acted with such propriety, as gained the approbation

of

of the audience. Mr. Johnson, commonly called *tall Johnson*, being near seven feet high, the son-in-law of Aaron Hill, and by him instructed, was properly enough pitched upon to represent John of Gaunt: though his conception was not equal to the animated dialogue of the character, or his feeling powerful enough for the situation of it, his good understanding and decent deportment rendered him not disagreeable to the spectators. In this scene too, Delane, in Richard, drew a good portrait of a king elated by pride and prosperity, and possessed with an obstinate and unfeeling disposition.

Y O R K.

I am the last of noble Edward's sons,
Of whom thy father, prince of Wales, was first;
His face thou hast, for even so look'd he,
Accomplish'd with the number of thy years.

This resemblance of Richard to his father appears pleasing in poetical description; but, in fact, though very handsome, the king was so unlike the Black Prince, that

it

it was insinuated, from that circumstance and his apparent degeneracy, that he really was not his son. - If his picture, says the Hon. D. Barrington, in his Observations on the statutes, which hangs over the pulpit in Westminster-abbey, be an original, he certainly had not the complexion of his father. He proceeds to observe, that the resemblance in point of features and complexion is more to be relied on, in proof of legitimacy, than any hereditary qualities of the mind.

I D E M.

Take Hereford's rights away, and take from time
His charters and his customary rights.

Let not to-morrow then ensue to-day.

Be not thyself; for how art thou a king? &c.

David Hume, who seems to estimate Shakespeare's beauties by his blemishes, asserts,* that, in all his historical plays, there is scarce any mention of civil liberty.

Suppose this should be granted; in how many plays, since the Restoration to this day,

* Vide Hume's Hist. 8vo, vol. VI. p. 192.

day, do we find the subject of civil rights either generally discussed or occasionally insisted upon? In how many dramas of the Greek tragedians is it professedly or accidentally introduced? Tragedy owes its rise to the passions; and though it may involve, as it ought, a topic in which all mankind are intimately concerned, yet by experience we find those plays, which are most fraught with sentiments in favour of public liberty, are least admired and followed. How often is Cato acted? What is become of Dennis's Liberty asserted? But Hume wanted to prove, from Shakspeare, that, in the reign of Elizabeth, the common rights of subjects were no object of public discussion. But is not the scene between Richard and York more interesting to an audience than all the laboured arguments of political oratory? A counsellor of state honestly tells his prince, that depriving a subject of his charters and customary dues was not only an act of oppression and injus-

tice, but a gross solecism: it was undermining the throne on which he sat, and contradicting his own right of succession to the crown!

But York, in the following impassioned lines, goes farther :

If you do wrongfully seize Hereford's rights,
You pluck a thousand dangers on your head,
You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts, &c.

Here the subject tells his prince, that, if he persists in his resolution to act with violence and injustice, the consequence will be the hatred of his people and a civil war. Warm expostulations of this kind are of the very essence of tragic dialogue; but a train of sentiments upon civil liberty is fitter for a discourse than a play. Shakspeare, though a court poet, has written more scenes to expose the tyranny and oppression of kings, the pride and rebellion of the nobles, and the turbulent disposition of the common people, than all the writers of plays put together.

In

In the history of the stage there is scarce any thing more singular than the fortune of that person who acted the part of York. This was one Mr. Samuel Stephens, a button-maker, in Pater-noster-row. He had been many years a constant attendant at the theatre, and especially when Booth acted a principal part in tragedy. Amongst his acquaintance he had frequently repeated speeches, or favourite portions of plays, especially from Othello. He was told by his friends that his voice resembled that of Booth, both in strength and melody; and that his imitation of that great actor's manner was just, as well as pleasing. He was at length tempted to make an offer of his abilities to Mr. Rich, who had just lost his great tragedian Mr. Quin, who had left him to engage at Drury-lane-theatre. In consequence of some temporary agreement, Stephens ventured, in October, 1734, to act his favourite character of Othello. His figure was not unsuitable to the part: his voice was strong;

and he had, by close auricular attention, acquired some of Booth's happy cadences. The spectators were equally surprised and delighted. During that most passionate scene between the Moor and Iago, in the third act, the pit cried out, "Bravo! bravo! *better than Quin! better than Quin!*" For six or seven successive nights this man drew after him large audiences. Quin, for a time, it is said, avoided going to the coffee-houses he usually frequented, lest he should be affronted with the loud praises of the button-maker.

However, the charm was not wound up so powerfully as to last long. Rich, either by mistake or design, persuaded the new actor to choose Polydore, in *The Orphan*, for his second character: than which nothing could have been more ill-advised. Stephens was, in form, bulky; in the management of his person, awkward; and advanced to near his fortieth year. This act of indiscretion was equally hurtful to the actor and manager. The
ladies

ladies more especially were displeased with such a misrepresentation of a young gay libertine, dressed in a large full-bottom wig, and, I believe, in red stockings, though they had long been laid aside by the politer part of the town : but Ryan's predilection for that colour, it is said, kept them too long on the stage. However, the audience did not forget the pleasure Stephens had afforded them in Othello : they forbore, on that account, shewing any marks of displeasure to his Polydore. To recover the good opinion of the public, he was forced to hide himself in his black visor. Stephens acted several characters, and particularly the duke of York, with approbation ; but, as he never came up to his first attempt, he gradually fell in the public esteem. He ended at last in an itinerant actor. His last stage was Bath ; where he died, about twenty years since, respected for his general good behaviour.

CHAPTER VIII.

Richard goes to Ireland. — Scene of Northumberland, &c. applied to modern politics. — War with Spain disliked by Sir Robert Walpole. — His dread of Jacobites, and dying prognostication. — Particular lines of Shakspeare vehemently applauded on account of supposed resemblance. — Richard marries an infant. — His great indiscretion. — Meaning of despised arms. — Why Prince Edward was called the Black Prince. — York's character. — Shakspeare's conduct of his plot. — Resemblance between Richard and Agamemnon. — Delane's Richard. — Who was the first anointed king in Europe. — Feigned submission of Hereford, and treachery of Northumberland. — Savage manners of our ancestors. — Fifty challenges in parliament. — Bishop of Carlisle's integrity. — Warburton makes Shakspeare a Whig. — Passive obedience. — Tom Chapman's absurdities and real merit. — Farquhar, Rowe, Sir Godfrey Kneller, and Hogarth.

AS soon as Richard, intent upon his Irish expedition, had left the stage, the
author

author introduces a political scene between the earl of Northumberland and the lords Willoughby and Ross, full of severe reflections upon the king's misconduct. The writing is not singularly good, but it was greatly distinguished by the particular behaviour of the audience, on the revival of this play, who applied almost every line that was spoken to the occurrences of the time, and to the measures and character of the ministry.

During a long peace of twenty-five years, the people, who seldom know their own happiness, were eager for a war with Spain. Provocations, it must be owned, had been given by the court of Madrid. The depredations committed by the Spanish guarda-costas on our merchant-ships roused the attention and resentment of the merchants, who addressed the parliament on the occasion; and the amiable Mr. Glover, then a member of parliament, seconded their petition with an animated speech. Sir Robert Walpole dreaded the

consequences of a war with the Spaniards, and feared it would unite the elder branch of the house of Bourbon in the same quarrel. He foresaw too that a rebellion in Scotland would be fomented by the high Tories and Jacobites in both kingdoms. He had always entertained a secret dread of those gentlemen, who assembled in clubs to toast the king over the water. Nay, some time before his death, which happened in 1744, this great minister, as I was then informed by a nobleman, predicted that the king would be reduced to the necessity of fighting for his crown.

The more reluctant Walpole appeared to second the wishes of the merchants in commencing hostilities, the more clamorous the people were for letting loose the vengeance of the nation against the Spaniards. When this tragedy was, after being long forgotten, revived, the cry for war was at the highest, and the spectators were ready to apply all that was uttered in the theatre to the transactions of the day

day and to the ministry. The dialogue of Northumberland and his friends furnished ample materials for political innuendo and application. There was in Bridgewater, who personated Northumberland, a most grave and solemn manner of delivering a sentiment, which dwelt fully upon the attentive hearer. When he pronounced the following words,

The king is not himself, but basely led
By flatterers, —

the noise from the clapping of hands and clattering of sticks was loud and boisterous. And when Ross said,

The earl of Wiltshire hath the state in farm, —

it was immediately applied to Walpole, with the loudest shouts and huzzas I ever heard. Likewise the following observation of Northumberland, that the king's revenue was not diminished by war, was met, by the audience, with redoubled shouts —

War

War hath not wasted it ; for warr'd he hath not.
 More hath he spent in peace than they * in war.

The two following remarkable lines, spoken by Willoughby and Northumberland, were heard with a dead and respectful silence : —

WILLOUGHBY.

The king's grown bankrupt, like a broken man.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

Reproach, and dissolution, hangeth over him.

And now, if Mr. Hume had read over this scene with attention, he would not have charged Shakspeare with deserting the civil rights of mankind : for what are the accusations of the speakers, in this dialogue, but so many vindications of the natural and legal claims of the subject ?

Act II. Scene II. The queen, Bushy, &c.

BUSHY.

Madam, your majesty is much too sad.

Though Shakspeare thought it for his purpose to have a queen in his tragedy, to
 heighten

* His ancestors.

heighten the distress of the scene, it is certain that Richard, about a year before he was dethroned, married a daughter of France, a child of eight years old : a most imprudent action, and correspondent with the rest of his conduct. He had no issue by his first wife, queen Anne ; and therefore should, in right policy, have married one who could have brought him children. By wedding a child, he deprived himself of the hopes of one great advantage and support, at least for a considerable time. William III. when the parliament obliged him to dismiss his Walloon guards, resented the affront in a most lively manner, and not without tears. In the bitterness of his heart he swore, that, if he had had a son, he would not have complied with their request.*

Scene III.

Y O R K.

Fighting her pale-fac'd villages with war
And ostentation of despised arms.

Despised,

* Dalrymple's Memoirs.

Despised, in this place, means *detested*, *abhorred*, &c.

I D E M.

Were I but now the lord of such hot youth
As when brave Gaunt, thy father, and myself,
Rescu'd the Black Prince, that young Mars of men, &c.

This calls to our minds several passages of the Iliad, where old Nestor vaunts, in most exulting terms, of his great prowess in his younger years. The renowned prince of Wales, eldest son of Edward III. was called the Black Prince from his complexion, not his armour, as is generally supposed.

Y O R K.

Well, well, I see the issue of these arms.

The character of York, as delivered down by historians, is not much to his advantage: he was esteemed a light and capricious man. Shakspeare, in this scene, though not in all the rest, conforms to the historical outline of the duke. In this interview with Bolingbroke, he first threatens, that, if he had power, he would attach the insurgents; then says, he will
remain

remain neuter. After that, he invites the heads of the conspiracy into his castle; and, upon Lancaster's telling him that he must go with him to seize the king's ministers in Bristol-castle, he calmly says, "It may be; I will go with you:" and yet the good man declares, "he is loath to break his country's laws:" but immediately after complies with the usurper, who makes him a chief instrument to support his rebellion.

Act III. Scene the king, Aumerle, bishop of Carlisle, &c.

The following lines bear a strong resemblance to Agamemnon's saluting his country's foil, and shedding tears for joy, in Homer's *Odyssæ*, book IV.

RICHARD.

Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand:

As a long parted mother with her child

Plays fondly with her tears, and smiles in meeting,

So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, O earth,

And do thee favour with my royal hands.

Ητοι ὁ μὲν χαίρων ἐπέθησεν το πατρίδος αἰνῆς,

Και κυνεί ἀπτομένῳ τὴν πατρίδα· πολλὰ δ' ἀπ' αὐτῆς

Δακρυὰ θέρμα χέοντ' ἐπεὶ ἀσπασίως ἰδεῖ γαίαν.

Well

Well pleas'd, the king beheld his Argive soil,
 And, leaping eagerly upon the strand,
 With tears of joy he kiss'd his native land.

When Philip II. husband to Queen Mary, first landed in England, he knelt down on the ground, and as he rose he drew his sword, as if resolving to conquer the kingdom.

Shakspeare has not, I believe, manifested more skill in the conduct of his plot than in this scene. The king lands from Ireland with a very few followers : his confidence is equal to his ignorance of his situation. He vents his complaints of rebellion in an affecting address to the English earth, and, without any apparent hopes of withstanding a powerful invader of his kingdom, he idly presumes, upon the sacredness of his person, that he shall conquer all opposition. The author gradually leads him from confidence to doubt, from doubt to fear, and from that to despondency. Every incident is managed with the nicest skill. Salisbury a-
 larms

larms him, and Scroope terrifies him into absolute despair. Richard's pathetic reflections on the miserable fate of kings has been justly admired, and was marked by Pope in his edition as a masterly passage.

Delane, who on the revival of this play acted Richard, though he did great justice to several scenes of the character, could not exhibit the tender feelings of the king's distressful situation. His voice was too loudly extended for the desponding and almost effeminate grief of this unhappy prince. Had Barry ever been called upon to represent this part, "he would (in our author's emphatic language) have drowned the stage with tears."

RICHARD.

Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king.

One would imagine that monarchs have been taught to believe that the anointing them with the sacred oil at their coronation was to operate like a miraculous charm, which was
to

to render their persons sacred and inviolable, and their actions superior to censure. But who was the first man who went through the anointing ceremony? Pepin of France, a robber and usurper; a man who deprived his lawful sovereign of his crown, and shut him in a cloister. This successful ruffian was supported in his treason by Pope Zachary, who stood in need of Pepin's assistance, and who afterwards, with the help of St. Boniface, performed the office of anointing a rebel, king of France, at Rheims.

R I C H A R D.

Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as we?
 Greater he shall not be: if he serve God,
 We'll serve him too, and be his fellows so.

This is the nature of man. In his prosperity he forgets all piety to heaven, all social ties and obligations. Richard, who, while his affairs wore a smiling aspect, neither revered God nor regarded man, is here, by our excellent moralizer, made so humble as to find no relief in his distress

stress equally efficacious with repentance and amendment of life.

RICHARD.

The power, I have, discharge, and let them go
To ear the land. ———

Mr. Steevens rightly says, that earing the land is ploughing it. It is properly a Scotch word, and is spelt *ere*, which is derived from another North-*British* word, *erde*, the earth.*

Scene III.

Our author pursues the thread of history very closely, and has given proper colours to the feigned submission of Hereford and the treachery of Northumberland. The king, deserted by the greatest part of his followers, retired to the Isle of Anglesea; where he purposed to embark for Ireland or France, there to wait some opportunity of returning to England: but the usurper, alarmed at this step, sent Northumberland to deceive him with false promises of

VOL. I. M loyalty

* Glossary to Gawin Douglas's Virgil.

loyalty and submission. The earl, by solemn protestations and shameful perjury, made himself master of the king's person, and carried him to Flint-castle. The interview between the king and his cousin of Lancaster was more rough and austere, on the part of the duke, than the poet has represented it. He told the king, in plain terms, that, his subjects being dissatisfied with his government, he was come to assist him to govern better. The king answered humbly : " Dear cousin, since that is your pleasure, it is ours also." To mortify the king on a very tender point, during the whole of his journey from Flint-castle to London, he was, besides being mounted on a very shabby horse, not suffered to change his apparel. No prince in Europe had so rich a wardrobe as Richard, or delighted so much in splendid and costly dresses.

Act IV. Scene I. The parliament-house.

A stronger and truer picture of the savage manners of our ancestors cannot be delineated

delineated than in this illiberal scene between the prime nobility of the land. A glove is thrown down by one nobleman with terms of scorn and reproach, and accepted by another with words of brutality and fierceness. The presence of the duke of Lancaster, master of the kingdom and pretender to the throne, could not awe the disputants into respect and silence. Mr. Hume says that no less than fifty challenges were given and accepted at this meeting of the parliament.

BOLINBROKE.

In God's name then I'll ascend the throne.

BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

Marry, God forbid!

Thomas Merks, bishop of Carlisle, (a name which ought to be revered to latest posterity,) was, in that great concourse of the clergy and laity assembled on this occasion, the only man who had the honesty and courage to speak in the defence of his unhappy sovereign, and against the violence and usurpation of Bo-

M 2

lingbroke.

lingbroke. His speech was long, and is quoted from Sir John Hayward, in the Parliamentary History. It contains a retrospective view of all kinds of government; and the bishop's argument is strengthened from scripture authority.

I D E M.

And shall the figure of God's majesty,
His captain, steward, deputy elect,
Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
Be judg'd by subject and inferior breath?

In vain does Dr. Warburton strive to make Shakspeare a Whig in principle, long before the limits between prerogative and privilege were determined. The political and religious creeds in Queen Elizabeth's reign were equally favourable to the absolute power of the prince; and I have often wondered that Lord Bolingbroke should assert, that the doctrine of passive obedience lay undiscovered, in some old homily till the times of James I. All the Chronicles of Hollingshead, Hall, Grafton, Stowe, and Fabian, breathe the same non-resisting

resisting spirit ; nor do I know that any English divine opposed it, till our incomparable Hooker, in his Ecclesiastical Polity, with an irresistible force of argument, demolished that infamous position on which is founded

Th'enormous faith of millions made for one.

Tom Chapman, a most excellent actor in various parts, but especially in all Shakspeare's clowns, in petulant would-be-wits, fops and fantastics, and many other absurd humorous characters, insisted upon representing what nature never designed him for, — a grave tragic character. The bishop of Carlisle was a delicious morsel, which he would not suffer to escape him. No man was ever more eager for preferment than Chapman for the *os rotundum* of tragic elocution. Rich, it was observed, took delight in thwarting the inclinations of his actors. How Chapman could prevail upon him to let him indulge himself in his absurd humour, I cannot guess ; unless he

flattered the manager's vanity by submitting to be taught by him : for this was a failing as weakly peculiar in Rich as the love of reciting tragedy was in Chapman. In truth, there was nothing more dissonant and unharmonious than his speaking, or rather bellowing, the bishop's harangue. He was endured in his discords, on account of his many excellences in comedy. But so fond was he of what he did not understand, that, although the first actor in his own proper walk, he would condescend to solicit earnestly for any inferior part in tragedy. It was hopeless, he knew, to contend for the character of Richard III. however, he solaced himself in the short part of Tressell, in the same play ; in which he inhumanly murdered a most pathetic description of Prince Edward's death by the hand of the duke of Gloster. At his own theatre of Richmond, where he had the double claim of manager and principal performer, he exerted his power, to the destruction of his
own

own property, as well as of all propriety. Instead of Tom in *The Conscious Lovers*, (in which part he was sure to give infinite pleasure,) he would needs assume the fine gentleman, in the person of young Bevil. As to the comedy of *The Busy Body*, he declared that *Marplot*, in which he excited as much good laughter as ever shook a merry audience, was not his proper part, and therefore insisted upon making himself of no consequence, by acting *Sir George Airy*. At *Richmond*, too, he strutted in the robes of *King Richard III.* to empty benches. Nothing but his being deserted by the spectators could restore him to his senses. However, *Tom Chapman* has had many to keep him company in his ridiculous passion. — Did not *Farquhar* think himself a good actor, and excite the commiseration of his friends, when he murdered his own *Sir Harry Wildair* on the *Dublin* stage? Did not the tragic *Rowe* write *The Biter*, a comedy; and was he not the only person of the audience that laughed

during the acting of it? Did not Sir Godfrey Kneller swear to Mr. Gay, that, instead of studying the art of painting, he ought to have been bred a soldier, because he had a martial mien? And did not Hogarth prefer his lamentable Sigismunda to his Marriage à la Mode?

CHAPTER

CHAPTER IX.

A king resigning his crown before his people.—

Shakspeare inferior to himself. — Interview

in the Tower between Richard and Lan-

caster. — Richard's folly in upbraiding the

infringement of oaths.—Oaths made only for

subjects. — University of Oxford contradict-

ing its own doctrine. — Character of Nor-

thumberland.—The family of Percy. — The

actor who presented to Richard a looking-

glass.—Richard's household. — Their profu-

sion and profligacy. — Meaning of the word

purveyor. — A member of parliament con-

demned to be hanged.—Saved by the clergy.—

Aumerle stigmatized.—Hallam an imitator

of Wilks. — Michael Stoppelaer, an honest

blunderer.—Story of Stoppelaer and Rich,

Scene continues, Re-enter York with

Richard.

WE cannot suppose a more awful and affecting transaction, than a prince brought before his subjects, compelled to deprive

prive himself of his royalty, and to resign his crown to the popular claimant, his near relation. This is a subject worthy the genius of Shakspeare; and yet, it must be confessed, he has fallen infinitely short of his usual powers to excite that tumult of passion which the action merited: he was ever too fond of quibble and conceit; but here he has indulged himself beyond his usual predilection for them; and I cannot help thinking, from this circumstance alone, that Richard II. was written and acted much earlier than the date in the stationers books of 1597. However, if it should happen to be as it is recorded, the author made the public ample amends by producing, the year following, one of the most perfect of all his pieces, The first Part of King Henry IV. However Shakspeare might think proper to heighten the scene by introducing Richard before the parliament to renounce his right to the crown, in fact it was not so. The poet has worked up the whole from what passed in the tower between the deputies

deputies of the parliament, Lancaster and Richard. The deputation consisted of the chief nobility and commons, with the archbishop of York at their head; who, after being introduced to the captive king, put him in mind of his voluntary offer to resign the crown in the presence of the archbishop of Canterbury and the earl of Northumberland: Richard acknowledged his promise, and desired to have an interview with his successor. After some conversation between him and Lancaster, the king, with an air of cheerfulness, called for the act of resignation, which he read over distinctly, and solemnly confirmed it by an oath; he then constituted the archbishop of York and the bishop of Hereford his procurators to signify his intention to parliament, and drawing the royal signet from his own finger, he put it on that of the duke of Lancaster; saying, at the same time, that he could wish all his people should know, that, if it were in his power, the duke should succeed him to the crown of England.

RICHARD.

There shouldst thou find one heinous article,
Containing the deposing of a king,
And cracking the strong warrant of an oath.

In vain does the prince accuse the subject of infringing his oath of obedience, who has himself broken through the most solemn of all obligations, the oath taken at his coronation. Richard thought, with King John and other arbitrary monarchs, that oaths were only framed for subjects: but it is surely absurd to imagine that millions should be bound by solemn ties to obey one man, and that he should be subject to no other restriction than his own will and pleasure. To say that the gospel exacts the same submission to a Nero as a Titus, to a Richard II. as a George II. is to libel that religion which professes to speak peace and good-will to man, and which certainly never intended to leave mankind worse than it found them. But indeed the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance has been ever found a wisp of straw, in this country, whenever
princes

princes have trampled upon law, justice, and humanity. The famous university of Oxford, at a time when it was supposed their immunities were in no danger, solemnly enforced unlimited obedience to the king ; but, when the privileges of that learned community were attacked by the hand of power, they supported the invader of the kingdom, who professed himself a friend to the laws and the constitution, with all their influence.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

My lord, dispatch ; read over these articles.

The family of Percy, one of the noblest and best allied of any in the kingdom, were, for their great hospitality and their military achievements, deservedly in high estimation with the people of England. However, it must be confessed, that, for many centuries, the history of the peerage furnishes us ample matter of contention between this noble family and the crown, which always ended much to the diminution of that splendor which a contrary conduct

conduct would have reflected on that illustrious house. The earl of Northumberland, in the play of Richard II. is drawn, by the pen of Shakspeare, as a most cruel and unremitting persecutor of Richard ; nor has he given the least hint for a conduct so apparently reprehensible, though history could have furnished him with a very plausible, if not a reasonable one.

When Richard set out for the Irish wars, having formed a jealousy of the earl of Northumberland, more from a consciousness of his own imbecillity than any real cause of distrust, he summoned the earl to attend him at Bristol, and to pass over with him to Ireland. Northumberland offered the king many excuses for his not being able to comply with his commands ; but more particularly one, with which the king was well acquainted, — the bad faith of the Scots ; intimating that they would in all probability invade England, should they find the army removed

moved from the borders. The infatuated king, not satisfied with this answer, ordered the earl and all his adherents to be proclaimed traitors.

Enter one with a glass.

The person who, about forty-five years since, was employed to bring in a mirror to Richard,* is now, by the general voice, allowed to be the first comedian of the age. He was then indeed a very young actor, and has gradually risen to that degree of estimation which he now deservedly enjoys.

RICHARD.

————— Was this the face

That every day, under his household roof,

Did keep ten thousand men? ———

This is a fact which history has delivered down to us. It bears the shew of great humanity and the most extended benevolence, and therefore merits a serious discussion. From what source of wealth
could

* Mr. Yates.

could so vast a multitude be maintained? If from the revenues of the crown, the greatness of the expenditure must have contributed to lessen their value: and accordingly we find that Gaunt charges the king, in the second act, with letting his lands to farm, and being not the king, but the landlord, of England. To supply this waste of the crown lands, it was necessary for the king to make frequent applications to the lords and commons; and indeed none of our Plantagenet princes gained from their subjects more ample parliamentary supplies than Richard. But the charge of maintaining so large a household, and such a number of officers dependent upon it, was one of the great enormities of this oppressive reign. Immoderate exactions, which were occasioned by the king's purveyors, whose office it was to procure provision for the king and household whenever they removed from one place to another, were of the most intolerable nature. It is observed, in our
law-

law-books, that the word *purveyor*, about this period of our history, was become so odious, that, by a statute, it was changed to *acateur*, or purchaser. But the court or household of Richard was branded on more accounts than one. The luxury, dissipation, and debauchery, of the courtiers, male and female, are recorded and censured by all our historians. In Richard's time, the house of commons, having for some time been separated from the lords,* began to feel their strength and importance. A certain member of that house, apprized of the profligate conduct of the courtiers, and their uncontrouled waste of the public money, made a motion to enquire into the abuses in the king's household. Richard, hearing of this unexpected attack upon his royal economy,

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* The separation of the two orders of men was a happiness which the people of Scotland never experienced; and this prevented their partaking of that democratic part of government to which they had an undoubted claim.

conomy, went immediately to the house of peers, and complained to the lords of the gross affront put upon him by a commoner. They, in compliance with the king's intimation, took up the business with great eagerness, and immediately ordered the author of the motion to be hanged. Very luckily for the offender, he happened to be a churchman; and, the archbishops and bishops falling on their knees and intreating for him, his life was saved.

A U M E R L E.

You holy churchmen, is there no plot
To rid the realm of this pernicious blot.

The character of Aumerle is, above all the noblemen of his time, stigmatized by Hume, for baseness, treachery, and cruelty.

The person who acted Aumerle, was one Mr. Adam Hallam, who, by an imitation of the action of Wilks, especially in a certain peculiar custom of pulling down his ruffles and rolling his stockings, joined to a good degree of diligence, so far gained
upon

upon Rich's want of discernment, that he hired him for seven years at a very large salary. When the term of his engagement was expired, his employer dismissed him, and for the greatest part of his remaining life he was an itinerant actor. Hallam, about six and thirty years since, translated *The Beggar's Opera* into French, which was represented in the little theatre in the Haymarket with some success. He also invented the armour and other decorations, preparatory to the single combat between the dukes of Hereford and Norfolk. Hallam died a kind of pensioner to the managers, who were the immediate successors of Rich, to whose family he was, I think, related.

ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER.

Before I speak my mind herein,
You shall not only take the sacrament, &c.

The personæ dramatis of this play are so numerous, that the manager was reduced to the necessity of employing honest

Michael Stoppelaer, of blundering memory, in the part of a dignified clergyman, the abbot of Westminster, to which he was by no means equal; for Stoppelaer's action and behaviour, added to an accidental hoarseness, set the spectators in a loud laugh. Honest Mich was remarkable for singing a Scotch or Irish song, particularly *Arrah my Judy* and *Corn-Riggs are bonny*. He was something of a scholar too, and educated at Trinity-College, Dublin. He sang, not *unpleasingly*, to a tune which I have forgotten, Horace's Ode of *Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus, &c.* It was Mich's faculty to utter absurd speeches and disagreeable truths, without any design to give offence. I shall quote one anecdote, which will give the reader an idea of his character. Rich was talking to some of the actors, when Stoppelaer was present, concerning the disproportioned agreement he had made with Hallam, who acted *Aumerle*, Stoppelaer shook his head and said *Upon my soul, Sir, he got on the blind side of*

you

you there. Rich, apprehensive of hearing something more offensive, left the company: somebody present observed that Stoppelear's speech was exceedingly improper, and really affronting, because every body knew that Mr. Rich had a great blemish in one of his eyes.—“ Upon my word, said Mich, *I never heard of it before, and I will go immediately and ask his pardon.*”

CHAPTER X.

Scene between Richard and his queen.—Some excellent lines.—Mrs. Horton, the actress, her great beauty.—Playing with strollers at Windsor.—Juba and Lord Malpas.—Mrs. Horton's address to ill-natured critics.—Her merit in acting.—Her love of coquetry.—Fine description of Bolingbroke and Richard.—His tyrannical conduct to the citizens of London.—Kings of England pillagers of London.—Richard and his groom.—Nat Clarke.—Anecdote of Rich.—Shakspeare differs from historians in the account of Richard's death.—Reflections upon it.—Sad consequences of Henry's usurpation.

ACT V.

Queen and Richard.

THE scene between Richard and the queen is not written in Shakspeare's happiest style; the play upon words and exuberant extension of sentiments are justly reprehended

reprehended by the critics. However, some part of it must be exempted from censure, and particularly this thought of Richard.

——— I am sworn brother, sweet,
To grim necessity, and he and I
Will keep a league with death.

Likewise his advice to the queen, to tell his melancholy tale, by a winter's fire,

————— To good old folks,
And send the hearers weeping to their beds,

is affecting. Colley Cibber has judiciously borrowed and applied it to the story of Henry VI. in his Richard III.

The queen was personated by Mrs. Horton; one of the most beautiful women that ever trod the stage. She was married, when very young, to a musician, who was insensible to her charms, and treated her, as it has been said, very brutally. The first notice that was taken of her was at Windsor, in the summer of 1713; where she acted Marcia, in Cato, in a company

of miserable strollers, who were drawn there on account of Queen Anne's making it the place of her residence several months in the year. Cato and his senate met with little respect from the audience ; and poor Juba was so truly an object of ridicule, that, when he cried out, in a transport of joy, on hearing Marcia's confession of her passion for him, " What do I hear ?" my Lord Malpas, wilfully mistaking the actor, loudly said, from behind the scenes, *Upon my word, sir, I do not know : I think you had better be any where else :* and this joke, I believe, put an end to the play. However, Mrs. Horton was so superior in merit to the rest, and so attractive in her person, that she was soon after very powerfully recommended to the managers of Drury-lane Theatre, who engaged her at a moderate salary. Her chief merit consisted in giving sprightliness to gay coquets, such as Belinda in the Old Batchelor, and Millamant in the Way of the World ; in which last character she was said to have excelled

excelled Mrs. Oldfield. Upon Mrs. Younger's quitting Drury-lane for a more advantageous income at Lincoln's-inn-fields, she was called upon by Wilks to act the part of Phillis in the *Conscious Lovers*. Younger had given the public so much entertainment in that part, that Mrs. Horton met with very uncandid treatment from the audience ; who so far forgot what was due to merit and the handsomest woman on the stage, that they endeavoured to discourage her by frequent hissing. She bore this treatment with patience for some time. At last, she advanced to the front of the stage, and boldly addressed the pit : " Gentlemen, what do you mean ? what displeases you ; my acting or my person ? " This show of spirit recovered the spectators into good humour, and they cried out, as with one voice, " No, no, Mrs. Horton ; we are not displeased : go on, go on. " As she advanced in life, though she still retained great beauty of features, she grew corpulent ;
and,

and, by striving to preserve the appearance of a fine shape, she laced herself so tight that the upper part of her figure bore no proportion to the rest of her body.

For many years she was a favourite actress in tragedy and comedy, and commanded a large income : but the natural and easy dialogue of Pritchard so captivated the public, that poor Horton was soon deprived of that influence which she had possessed, and was stripped of her characters one by one. At last she became so low in credit with the public, that Rich, out of compassion, offered to employ her at the reduced salary of 4*l.* per week. This she refused, in a fit of ill-timed resentment, and could never persuade him to make a second offer. Mr. Garrick and Mr. Lacy, by giving her a part of a benefit annually, made some addition to a small annuity she enjoyed. Her beauty was so remarkable in the early part of life, that few young men could see her without having a tendresse for her, which she never

ver discouraged ; for, indeed, she was so true a coquet, that a compliment to her charms, from the meanest person in the theatre, was acceptable, and always returned with a smile or tap with her fan. On the verge of threescore she dressed like a girl of twenty, and kept simpering and ogling to the last, and if features, preserved even at that cold age, could justify her weakness, she certainly was pardonable ; for, of all the women I ever saw, she had the greatest pretence to vanity. A nobleman, some few years before her death, offered her a very large settlement to live with him, which she generously rejected. Her sole passion was to be admired. She died about the year 1756.

Scene II. York and his duchess.

Y O R K.

As in a theatre the eyes of men,
After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him who enters next.

This pathetic description of Richard's entry into London, finely contrasted with
that

that of Bolingbroke, has been universally admired; Mr. Dryden declares that he knows nothing equal to it in ancient dramatic poetry, and, I believe, we may defy the moderns to pattern it.

I D E M.

Mens eyes did scowl

On Richard: no man cry'd, God save him!
 No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home,
 But dust was thrown upon his sacred head!

Richard's reception in London could not be very different from the poet's description of it*. Some citizens were brutal enough to propose to his rival the putting

* Stowe has added a circumstance in Lancaster's behaviour on this occasion, which is not to be found, I think, in any other writer.

“When the duke came within two miles of the city, he caused the host to stay, and then said to the commons of the city, ‘My masters, behold here your king, consider well what you will do with him.’—They answered, ‘He should be sent to Westminster;’ whereupon he was delivered unto them, and they led him to Westminster, and from thence by water to the tower of London.”

ting him to immediate death. And, though no man of humanity can forbear resenting with indignation the base proposal of these wretches, it must be confessed that Richard merited little favour from the Londoners. He had given them great and almost unpardonable provocation. For the offences of a few members of the corporation he had deprived the city of London of its privileges, and imprisoned the chief magistrate and others next to him in office. In his whole conduct in this affair he manifested a mean and cruel disposition. When the king, upon the city's humble submission, was reconciled to the citizens, he accepted, from the mayor, aldermen, and principal inhabitants, a grand entertainment, at which he and all his court were present. The presents given to Richard, his queen, and courtiers, were estimated at ten thousand pounds, which, at that time, amounted to an immense sum. On this occasion, to win the good-will of Richard, the city displayed all its grandeur, and no expence
was

was spared to shew their profound respect to royalty. But, notwithstanding the king expressed himself to be highly pleased with his reception, and received the magnificent gifts presented to him with complacency, he fined the city of London in the sum of ten thousand pounds. This exorbitant penalty and outrageous act of power, when a contrary conduct was expected, exasperated the citizens, and they never forgave the king.

The kings of England, it must be observed, from King John to James I. seemed to have considered the city of London as a place which they might safely pillage whenever impelled by their necessities. To gain the good-will of that shameless spendthrift, Henry III. who had the folly to declare, *that it was more charity to bestow money upon him than on the meanest beggar*, London was obliged to pay down the sum of 20,000 l. and James I. we are informed by Camden, without so much as pretending any right or claim except his
immediate

immediate wants, demanded also of the Londoners 20,000 l. The citizens, although they knew his weakness and despised his power, yet with great condescension made him an offer of half the sum; which James prudently accepted. Quarrels between the court and the city of London have never produced any real advantage to the crown. To affect a contempt for a respectable body of men, who contribute so largely to the revenue, is something more than ridiculous.

Act V. Scene V. Richard and a groom.

G R O O M.

Oh! how it yearn'd my heart when I beheld
In London streets —————

When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary;
That horse, which thou so often hast bestrid,
That horse, that I so carefully have dress'd.

This is one of those scenes which disgrace the tragedy of a great king, and gives to me convincing proof, that Shakspeare, after writing this play, and not finding it much relished by the audience, took no suitable

suitable pains to correct and improve it. However, the groom speaks much in character ; for he seems more anxious about the horse, *which he had so carefully dressed*, than concerned for the misfortunes of his master. One of our Chronicles relates, that, when Richard was first delivered into the power of Lancaster, a favourite greyhound of his abandoned his master, and fawned upon the conqueror, who seemed much pleased with the omen.

To fill up the account of the actors in this play when last revived, I shall just mention some particulars relating to Nat Clarke, who acted the groom. He was a man fitted by nature to represent underparts. Clarke was the original Filch in the Beggar's Opera ; and, though I greatly admire Mrs. Wilson's adroitness in it, yet I think his meagre countenance and shambling figure were much better adapted to the character of a pickpocket than a female's delicate person. Nat was the chronicle of the theatre : he knew the whole
history

history of the players, and made himself acceptable to busy enquirers after theatrical matters by communicating to them many a laughable anecdote. His chief employment (on account of his resembling Rich in size and figure) was that of an under-harlequin, to relieve his master in such situations of the pantomime as were least interesting. Nat was happy when the audience, from similarity of form, were surprised into a clap by mistaking the man for the master. The substitute was so like the original, that Rich one night paid severely for the resemblance. One of the actors, having had some words with Clarke during the representation of a pantomime, waited till he should find an opportunity to shew his resentment. Unluckily Rich threw himself in the way of the angry person, as he came off the stage, and received such a blow of the fist, on his stomach, as for some time deprived him of the power to breathe. The man, perceiving his mistake, implored the manager's

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ger's pardon; protesting, upon his honour, he thought that he had struck Nat Clarke. "And pray, said Rich, what terrible provocation could Clarke give, to merit such a violent blow?"

Some few years before his death, Clarke retired to Hammersmith; where he lived at ease, and treated his visitors with good ale and much history.

R I C H A R D.

Mount, mount, my soul! thy seat is up on high;
Whilst my gross flesh sinks downward here to die.

Though Shakspeare has followed the historian who makes Sir Pierce of Exon and his accomplices the murderers of Richard, yet the greatest number of writers, on this period of our history, assert that he was starved to death. His dead body was produced to the public in a shell, with his face uncovered. His successor attended his funeral, with dissembled grief, and followed him to that place which his ambition had marked out for him.

By

By whatever means this unhappy prince was sent out of the world, it cannot be doubted that all methods were put in practice, by those to whom he was entrusted, to make life as burdensome to him as possible. Power usurped is ever suspicious, arbitrary, and cruel. By various modes of brutal unkindness, studied neglect, and outrageous insult, it was no difficult matter to render him weary of his existence, and to make him wish for repose, where only it was to be had, in the grave. They might abridge his diet, disturb his sleep, and be artful in finding out methods to distress and torment him whose cause no man durst espouse. The messengers of his death they knew would be entertained with a glad welcome by their employers:

We may collect, from Shakspeare and the Chronicles, that Richard, in his person, was extremely handsome; in his younger years he gave evident proofs of ability, more particularly in his suppressing, by an act of personal courage and presence

of mind, at the age of sixteen, the dangerous insurrection of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw. His greatest enemies were his three ambitious uncles, the dukes of Lancaster, York, and Gloster, who purposely suffered his mind to be uncultivated with princely virtues, and his morals to be corrupted by vicious companions. They took no care to have him trained in the art military, the only great and shining accomplishment of the age.

During the time of the feudal system, the prince supported his power by military prowess. Without this, he could not guard himself against the incroachments of his barons, who, in their own districts, were so many arbitrary despots. The first and third Edward, by perpetual wars on the continent and their own personal courage, kept their peers constantly in employ, and preserved a reverence for their persons. By their wars with France, the rapacity of their followers was in some measure glutted. All wars with France, till
that

that which raged in 1782, were the dear delight of the English nation, and ushered in sometimes with bonfires and other tokens of public rejoicing.

Richard was fond of fine clothes, of pomps, shows, and ceremonies. The spirit of chivalry, that spur to noble actions, superior in some respects to the Greek and Roman military institutions, which had been revived by his father and grandfather, he seemed not to have cherished, except in the mock representation of it in tilts and tournaments. He wished to gain popularity; but his conversation was too trifling, and too often prostituted, to gain upon the affections of the people. Dr. Henry attributes many social virtues to this prince, and amongst the rest his fidelity to friendship; but that virtue, which is praiseworthy in a private man, often degenerates in princes to a most pernicious vice. Gross partiality to a few subjects is inconsistent with the good of the whole community. With Richard and his ministers it was an

established maxim, ' Be true to me, and I will be faithful to you ;' — nay, says Lord Bolingbroke, he was so very weak, that his favourites prevailed upon him to bind himself to them by an oath. He was undone at last by his great confidence in his own importance: he weakly imagined, that the insulted, the injured, and the oppressed, would be tied down by such oaths as he wantonly imposed upon them. Acts of parliament were heaped upon acts, to establish laws, which were in their intention unsalutary, and consequently odious. History can scarcely furnish such an instance of a monarch being so suddenly abandoned by all his subjects. There was, in this unhappy man, one disagreeable quality, which contributed not a little to his downfall; he had an imperious and insolent manner of speaking, on important occasions, to persons who, from their offices in the state, claimed a right to give him advice, and ought to have been listened to with attention. When the lords and commons,

commons, in parliament assembled, sent a deputation to him, to inform him, that it was necessary for the good of the state he should remove from their employments his treasurer and chancellor, he bade them meddle for the future with no such thing; adding, ‘*That he would not, for them, or at their pleasure, remove the meanest scullion in his kitchen.*’ Of Richard II. it may with truth be said, that he had all the bad qualities of his great-grandfather, Edward II. without any mixture of his good ones.

Notwithstanding the deposition of Richard was universally approved at that time, the consequence of Lancaster’s usurpation, who set aside the right heir to the crown, descended from Lionel, duke of Clarence, proved more fatal to the kingdom than even the weak and arbitrary conduct of the deposed king. Shakspeare has three plays (the three parts of Henry VI.) which include a period that exhibits nothing but the slaughter of princes and subjects.—Within the space of thirty-six years, twelve

set battles were fought in England, concerning the succession to the crown, by Englishmen only; more than fourscore princes of the blood royal were slain by each other's swords. Nay, the hand of death did not stop till it had actually extinguished all the male heirs of each line*.

* Parliamentary History.

King

King Henry IV. First Part.

CHAPTER XI.

What rank the First Part of Henry IV. holds in the opinion of the critics.— Its remarkable excellences. — Falstaff and his rivals.— The poet's intention in advancing the king's sickness. — Crusades.—Thirsty entrance of the soil explained.—Shakspeare and Voltaire. — Earl of Worcester.—Thieves of the day's beauty, why so called.— Sir John Oldcastle. — Sir John Falstaff. — Gib cat.— A laugh indulged. — Foote's serenade of cats. — Cat Harris. — The original performer of Falstaff, Lowin.— Cartwright, Lacy.— Henry's jealousy of the house of March. — Ransom of prisoners. — Speeches of Hotspur and Eteocles. — Amyot and Gascoigne. — Burbage.— Tayler. — Hart. — Wintershal.— Booth's Hotspur commended. — Anecdote of Giffard and Booth.—Garrick's Hotspur.

IN

The opinion of Dr. Warburton, and I believe almost every critic, the First Part of *Henry VIII.* is one of our author's plays, in which he has not indeed for power or grandeur, but for scenes of passion, or even for richness of nature or situation; but for sublimity of character, propriety of manner, and dignity of expression.

The King, the Prince of Wales, and Balthazar, are admirable portraits. The two first are beautiful resemblances taken from nature, and the variation of humour, and heightening of passion, given to the former, render him an interesting dramatic personage.

As for Balthazar, of whose character no poet has given us much, and every man will be ready enough to say any thing, from an imagination of his not being able to treat a noble subject as it deserves; he, in the estimation of all men, is the great masterpiece of our inimitable writer, and of all dramatic poetry. Shakspeare had given

ven

ven several sketches of humorous characters, as if to try his abilities, before he introduced to the public this theatrical prodigy, which then astonished Ben Jonson, the great poet of humour, and has bidden defiance to all succeeding attempts to rival it. What name too despicable can we give to those wretched imitations of the fat knight, the Tucca of Jonson's Poetaster, and the Cacofogo of Fletcher? Above fifty years since, it was traditionary, among the comedians, that Cacofogo was the intended rival of Falstaff, whom he resembles in nothing but in bulk and cowardice. And, as to Tucca, I submit to the reader, whether that part be not a fruitless attempt of surly Ben to measure swords with his master.

Act I. Scene I.

K I N G.

So shaken as we are, so wan with care!

The action of this play begins early in the reign of Henry IV. and before he

he had been afflicted with any dangerous and lingering distemper : at least, history takes no notice of his being diseased before the battle of Shrewsbury.

Shakspeare thought it would best answer his purpose to represent the king labouring with sickness, and resolving on his recovery to visit the Holy Land, in conformity to his prior declaration in the preceding play of Richard, to expiate the murder of his sovereign.

All our historians agree in this purposed expedition of Henry, which, on a close examination, seems not to be very well founded in probability. The crusades, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, had almost entirely ceased. The passion of Christian princes to recover Jerusalem from the infidels was then almost expiring, from the ill success of many great and powerful adventurers, and from a perfect knowledge of the crafty designs of the court of Rome, to involve monarchs in foreign wars, that the sovereign pontiffs might
reap

reap advantages by their absence from their dominions. Besides, Henry was too sagacious to leave his kingdom with a title so doubtful as his was. If so weak and worthless a man as Prince John could, in the absence of his brother Richard at Jerusalem, excite such disorders as to make it necessary for that king to quicken his return to England, what had not Henry Bolingbroke to apprehend from one who had a fairer title to the crown than himself? The expedition to the Holy Land seems to have been a feint; perhaps, indeed, at some times, when, in spite of worldly grandeur, his conscience rose with some violence upon him, a transient thought of expiating his guilt, by this universal panacea for all crimes, might come across his mind, but, in all probability, without any fixed purpose or vigorous resolution.

I D E M.

No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
 Shall daub her lips with her own childrens blood.

This

This passage is very difficult : Dr. Johnson and Mr. Steevens have, with great ingenuity, endeavoured to explain it, but, I think, without success. The *entrance* of the soil is, I believe, an unnecessary adjunct ; and means, I think, the soil or land itself. The epithet *thirsty* is employed to concur with the verb *daub*. The whole is a periphrasis, signifying, no longer shall English ground be stained with the blood of its inhabitants.

I D E M.

To chase those pagans in those holy fields,
Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet,
Which, fourteen hundred years ago, were nail'd,
For our advantage, to the holy cross.

The circumstance of our Saviour's treading the soil of Jerusalem, and dying there for all mankind, is finely and pathetically described by Voltaire in his *Zaire*, and employed as a convincing argument to reclaim an apostate to the true faith :

E'en in the place where thou betray'st thy God,
He dy'd, my child, to save thee ! Turn thine eyes
and see,

For

For thou art near his holy sepulchre !

Thou canst not move a step *but where he trod !*

Thou tremblest !—————

HILL'S ZARA. A&II.

The pleasure of walking over that ground which had been trodden by Christ and his apostles, was, no doubt, one great inducement to many Christians to assume the cross and fight against the infidels. Nor can this be deemed a meer act of superstition : for, if our learned travellers can feel an enthusiastic delight in walking over those parts of Rome, where the Scipio's, Pompeys, and Brutus's, formerly trod, Christians may, with the same or superior ardour, visit those places which our Saviour and his apostles were known to frequent.

WESTMORELAND.

————— In the very heat

And pride of their contention.——

That is, during the fury of the battle, when both sides seemed to be equally matched.

I D E M.

This is his uncle's teaching. This is Worcester,
Malevolent to you in all aspects.—

Thomas

Thomas Percy, earl of Worcester, is charged, by our old Chronicles, with exciting his brother and nephew to rebellion, from motives of peculiar rancour to the king. This our author, who read those histories with great attention, has, in several parts of this play, sufficiently marked.

Scene II. Prince and Falstaff.

F A L S T A F F.

Let not us, that are squires of the night's body,
Be called thieves of the day's beauty.

The *day's beauty* is the sun; consequently Falstaff intreats that he and his associates may not be termed robbers in open day. He rather wishes to be distinguished by the honourable title of Diana's foresters, minions of the moon, &c. This suits with Falstaff's courage, who would much rather rob by night than in the face of the sun like a daring highwayman.

P R I N C E H E N R Y.

As the honey of Hybla, my old lad of the castle!

I have

I have read with attention, more than once, the several notes of Dr. Farmer and Mr. Steevens, in which they labour to exculpate Shakspeare from having ever introduced Sir John Oldcastle in his play of Henry IV. Fuller, who wrote about twenty years after our author's death, and seems to have been no superficial inquirer into matters in which the reputation of families was concerned, absolutely fixes the charge upon Shakspeare, and I cannot help thinking that the apology in the epilogue, to the second part of this dramatic history, "*For Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man,*" is somewhat awkward, if Shakspeare had not himself given some offence respecting Oldcastle.

Sir John Oldcastle, commonly called the martyr, whom Henry V. sacrificed to the clergy, because they assisted him with their purses in his expedition against the crown of France, was, in all probability, a man of a lively and gay humour; and the clergy, whom he had provoked, might, in re-

venge, represent him to the populace as a light and lewd fellow, a drunkard and a profane jester. This would furnish an opportunity to the poets of the times to present him on the stage in no favourable light. But, though this satirical abuse of Oldcastle might be permitted during the times of popery, yet, when his character became better known in the days of Queen Elizabeth, such freedoms would give offence. I think it is possible that Shakspeare might at first have inadvertently fallen into this error, and have laid hold on Sir John Oldcastle as a proper subject of buffoonery and mirth. I shall have occasion, in the course of these observations, to say more on this subject.

F A L S T A F F.

A gib cat or a lugg'd bear.

Amongst a great number of very excellent remarks, which are plentifully strewed in the editions of Shakspeare by Johnson and Steevens, we must not be surprised

fed if we find ſome that will occasionally raiſe our mirth, and ſuch as we may ſafely pronounce unworthy of their writers. In the laſt edition of the Variorum Shakspeare, we have no leſs than four grave notes on the meaning of the word *gib*. Two reverend gentlemen, Dr. Percy and Mr. Warton, beſides Mr. Steevens and Mr. Tollet, have laboured hard to explain what ſurely was very generally underſtood: that a gib cat is one that is gelt, or caſtrated, might have been told in four or five lines. Mr. Warton preſents us with many authorities from Caxton, from the Romant of the Roſe, &c. to prove that Gilbert and Tib, were ancient names given to he-cats. But how came the critics to forget the authority of Shakspeare himſelf in Romeo and Juliet, where Mercutio calls Tibbald *rat-catcher and king of cats*, from his name *Tybalt*?

——Tybalt, you rat-catcher,

Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives.

These curious notes might have been closed with a duetto, sung by Dr. Defaguliers, to that good-natured gentleman, Frederick, prince of Wales, (who dearly loved the bagatelle,) between a he and a she-cat. The prince often confessed that the doctor understood cat-language better than any man in England.

When Foote first opened the theatre in the Haymarket, amongst other projects, he proposed to entertain the public with an imitation of cat-music; for this purpose, he engaged a man famous for his skill in mimicking the mewing of cats. This person was called Cat Harris. He not attending the rehearsal of this odd concert, Foote desired Shuter would endeavour to find him out, and bring him with him. Shuter was directed to some court in the Minories, where this extraordinary musician lived. But, not knowing the house, Shuter began a *cat-solo*. Upon this, the other looked out of the window, and answered him with a cantata of the same sort.—

fort.—“ Come along, says Shuter, I want no better information that you are the man :—Mr. Foote stays for us :—we cannot begin the cat-opera without you !”

The original performer of Falstaff was, doubtless, that excellent comedian W. Lowin ; the praise and boast of his time for variety of comic parts. In Downes's *Roscius Anglicanus*, we have the name of Cartwright for Falstaff's representative, soon after the Restoration. Little is said of this player by any stage-historian. We find his name in the *Rehearsal*, in which he spoke Bayes's prologue, I think, and acted one of the Majesties of Brentford. It is somewhere said that he was a bookseller. Lacy, a favourite actor of Charles II. who had him drawn in three different characters, still to be seen at Hampton Court, succeeded Cartwright in Falstaff. Langbaine speaks of him as the most perfect comic player of his time. Cibber, I fancy, had never seen him ; for the name of Lacy is not mentioned in his apology, He was

one of the recruits which the king's company picked up soon after the Restoration. I can find no trace of his having acted before the civil wars. He wrote three plays, in which, I believe, his own action was the principal recommendation. He died about the year 1683.

The prince of Wales was represented originally, if we may be allowed to guess, by Burbage, who was tall and thin. I shall defer what I have to say farther of the prince and Falstaff till their next scene.

Scene III. King, Northumberland,
Hotspur, Worcester, &c.

K I N G.

The moody *frontier* of a servant brow.

Dr. Warburton proposes to read *frontlet*. Mr. Steevens says the word *frontlet* does not signify forehead:—not in its original sense, it is granted: but surely in its applied and metaphorical. He did not recollect that, in a parallel passage, Lear says to Goneril,

Now,

Now, daughter, what means that frontlet on?

K I N G.

Shall we buy treason and indent with fears?

It may be asked, Who are the sellers of this treason?—The Percy family: though they had not, indeed, according to Mr. Steevens, forfeited their lives and estates, the king plainly insinuates that they were the abettors and partisans of Mortimer, and encouragers of his traiterous practices. Henry's anger is principally owing to his hatred and jealousy of Mortimer, whose title to the crown was much clearer than his own. In such dread did he hold the house of March, that he would not permit any of the family to be named in parliament.

H O T S P U R.

Revolted Mortimer!

These two words should be spoken loudly and vehemently, from a sudden impulse of passion, which the impetuous Hotspur

P 4

could

could not restrain. Upon the king's turning quickly on him with a look of anger and resentment, he immediately softens the tone of his voice to a low and submissive cadence,

K I N G.

Send us your prisoners, or you shall hear of it!

In the time of the feudal system, one great motive to incite the barons to serve in war, was the treasure they acquired by the ransom of the prisoners they took in battle. A war with France was, to the nobility of this kingdom, for that reason, a very desirable event.

Sir William Manny, in the French wars during the reign of Edward III. is said by historians to have gained immense treasures by the prisoners he captured in war. For this reason, Henry's conduct, in demanding all Hotspur's prisoners, appears to be very unjust.

By the ancient laws of Norway, the prisoner, and every thing he had about him,
belonged

belonged to the captor ; except the gold in his purse, which was reserved for the king*.

H O T S P U R.

As this ingrate, this canker'd Bolingbroke.

Cankered Bolingbroke was a term which Mr. Addison, in conversation, applied to Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke ; with what propriety I do not see. That this great statesman was ardent both in his friendships and enmities is to be learned from his letters and his general conduct ; but that he harboured a rancorous and cankered disposition I cannot persuade myself. Addison, however benevolent in his writings, was not free from that leaven of party which often fours the best minds.

I D E M.

By heavens ! methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line did never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks ;

So

* Speculum regale.

So he that did redeem her thence might wear,
Without co-rival, all her dignities.

This sally of Hotspur Dr. Warburton has stamped with the epithets of heroic and sublime; and, to justify Shakspeare, has quoted Euripides. Dr. Johnson has critically defended this rapturous explosion of a hot and fiery disposition, which is certainly not quite similar to the speech of Eteocles in the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides, nor can it be termed allegorical. The learned Mr. Woodhull, in a note to his translation of that tragedy, has given this speech of Eteocles, as versified by Amyot, from an extract of Plutarch's treatise on Fraternal Love; and another translation from Gascoigne's works, published in 1575. It must be owned that the lively Frenchman, in spirit and elegance, excels the Englishman.

Je monteroie en l'étoilé séjour
Du clair soleil, où commence le jour;
Et je descendrois dessous la terre basse;
Si je pouvois acquérir par l'audace
Le royaume souverain des dieux.

Gascoigne

Gascoigne rather creeps than soars :

If I could rule or reign in heav'n above,
And eke command in depth of darksome hell,
No toil, no travail, should my sprites abash,
To take the way unto my restless will, —
To climb aloft, or down for to descend.

I D E M.

By heavens, he shall not have a scot of them.

In our author's time this was a proverbial expression, meaning — he shall not have the most worthless thing I have*.

I D E M.

Oh ! let the hours be short,
Till fields, and blows, and groans, applaud our sport.

This spirited exclamation of Hotspur resembles a speech of Eteocles, in the *Septem contra Thebas* of Æschylus :

Μη νυν, εαν θυσηκοντας η τετρωμενους

Πυθησθαι, κωκυτοισιν αρπαλιζετε*

Τατω γαρ Αρης βοσκειται φονω βροτων.

If haply now your eyes behold the dead
Or wounded, burst not forth in loud laments ;
For blood and carnage are the food of war.

POTTER.

The action of this scene is very animating and important. The jealousy, suspicion,

* Fuller.

picion, and distrust, of Henry, are finely contrasted with the high spirit and daring impetuosity of Hotspur; Agamemnon and Achilles are not more strongly delineated, nor their passions more highly coloured, by Homer, than these characters of Shakspeare. The conduct of the scene is truly dramatic, from the beginning to the close of it.

I have supposed, and I believe with probability, that Burbage originally acted the Prince of Wales; and am of opinion we may give Hotspur to Taylor, the original Hamlet. If Taylor was, as we may conjecture from what the Queen says of him in the fencing-scene between Hamlet and Laertes, ‘fat, and scant of breath,’ we cannot suppose him fit for the tall and slender Harry. After the Restoration, Hart represented Hotspur, Burt the Prince of Wales, and Wintershul the King. The excellence of Hart is universally acknowledged; of Burt we can only transcribe what Downs has recorded. He
ranks

ranks him in the list of good actors, with Shotterel and Cartwright, but without any discriminating marks. That he was not a man of superior merit we may gather from his being obliged to resign the part of Othello to Hart, who had formerly acted Cassio when Burt played the principal character. Wintershul was, in the opinion of the best critics, a very judicious actor in comedy and tragedy, and an excellent teacher of the art he professed. He was so celebrated for the part of Cokes, in Ben Jonson's Bartholomew-Fair, that the public preferred him even to Nokes in that character. Wintershul is mentioned with honour in the notes on the Rehearsal; he died in July, 1679.

Betterton's Hotspur is celebrated by Cibber amongst his most capital exhibitions, and by Sir Richard Steele in the Tatler. But the versatility of Betterton's genius was never more conspicuous than in his resigning the choleric Hotspur, in his declining years, and assuming the humour
and

and gaiety of Falstaff, in which he is said to have been full as acceptable to the public as in the former. Powel was, I believe, his successor in Hotspur. With the happy advantages of person, voice, and gesture, this comedian must have given a striking resemblance of a young, gallant, and brave, soldier. But Powel's intemperance rendered him often unequal to himself; and he so far at last impaired his abilities, that his parts were often supplied by players of inferior merit.

Booth's Hotspur was, in the opinion of the critics who saw him in the character, one of the most perfect exhibitions of the stage. His strong, yet harmonious, pipe, reached the highest note of exclamatory rage without hurting the music of its tone. His gesture was ever in union with his utterance, and his eye constantly combined with both to give a correspondent force to the passion. His tread in this part was quick, yet significant, accompanied with princely grandeur. — When Giffard, late manager of the theatre
in

in Goodman's Fields, — an actor much favoured by Wilks, on account of paying him that most pleasing of all flattery, an imitation of his manner of acting, — was, through the interest of his great exemplar, favoured with a benefit, and permitted to act that night the Prince of Wales; Booth, who entertained too great a contempt for Wilks in tragedy, and of consequence still more despised his humble imitator, declared, without any ceremony, that he would that night 'let off an Irish actor.' The theatre was extremely crouded, both in the front and on the stage. I have heard Mr. Lacy, the late manager, Mr. Victor, and others, who were present, declare, that they never saw so animated a performance, and attended with such loud and repeated plaudits from all parts of the theatre, as Booth's Hotspur. Giffard, who was just arrived from Dublin theatre, honestly owned that he was struck with astonishment, and heartily joined in the general approbation. When roused by accidental jealousy

jealousy or humour, Booth always excelled himself.

In acting Othello once, to a small audience, Booth threw such a languor into several scenes of the part, which was said to be his master-piece, that nobody could discern their favourite and admired actor. But, in the third act, as if roused from a lethargy to the most animating vigour, he displayed such uncommon fire and force, that the players and the audience seemed to be equally electrified by this sudden exertion of his powers. When, at the end of the act, the players retired into the green-room, Cibber, who acted Iago, said to him, ‘ Pry-thee, Barton, what was the charm that inspired you so all on a sudden ?’ — ‘ Why, Colley, I saw, by chance, an Oxford-man in the pit, whose judgement I revere more than that of a whole audience.’

In the agreement between Quin and Garrick, in 1746, to assist each other with their mutual skill in several select plays, Quin laid his hand upon Henry IV. and
called

talled upon Garrick to give him his assistance, by exerting his talents in Hotspur : 'For you know, David, Falstaff is so weighty, that he cannot do without a lever.' The other complied, though I believe with some reluctance ; for he knew that the portion of Hotspur, which best suited his animated manner of speaking, would be exhausted in the first scene of the part. The old comedian, by this manœuvre, surprised the caution of the young actor.

The person of Garrick was not formed to give a just idea of the gallant and noble Hotspur. The mechanic, or bulky, part was wanting ; nor could the fine flexibility of his voice entirely conquer the high rant and continued rage of the enthusiastic warrior. He had not then acquired that complete knowledge of modulation which he was afterwards taught by more experience. During the acting of this play, he was seized with a cold and hoarseness ; and, after acting Hotspur about five

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nights with applause, though not with that universal approbation which generally attended his performance, he fell sick, and was confined to his chamber six or seven weeks. This happened about the latter end of February; nor did he make his appearance on the stage till he acted Ranger, in the *Suspicious Husband*, for his benefit, in April following.

His dress in *Hotspur* was objected to: a laced frock and a *Ramilie* wig were thought too insignificant for the character.

During his illness, as much concern was expressed by the public, for his recovery, as if he had been a prince of the blood greatly honoured and beloved. The door of his lodgings was every day crouded with servants, who came from persons of the first rank, and indeed of all ranks, to enquire after his health. Mrs. Oldfield happened to be in some danger in a *Gravesend*-boat: and, when the rest of the passengers lamented their approaching fate, she, with a conscious dignity, told them, their
 deaths

deaths would be only a private loss ;—‘ But I am a public concern.’ The indisposition of Garrick might, more seriously, be termed such.

Barry’s Hotspur, from his noble figure, rapid and animated expression, and lively action, was pleasing and respectable : but there is a military pride, and camp-humour, if I may be indulged in the expression, to which Barry was a stranger. For the same reason, Mr. Smith’s representation of this part, though well marked with fire, impetuosity, and dignified deportment, is somewhat defective.

CHAPTER XII.

Pitiful ambition to gain applause. — Gorbellied knaves. — Lady Percy and Brutus. — A green-room quarrel. — Five authorities for rivo. — Mr. Steevens justified. — Clement Marot and the weavers. — Strapado explained, from Tom Coriat. — Improvement on Shakspeare. — Falstaff's superior wit. — Foote and Garrick. — A mock-representation of the Prince and King. — Extract from Cambyfes. — An account of sack. — Bristol milk. — Wine of the ancients. — Betterton's Falstaff. — A Dublin paviour an excellent actor. — History of Falstaff. — Booth, Mills, Quin, Berry, Harper. — Henderson.

ACT II.

The Carriers.

FIRST CARRIER.

Out of all *cefs*.

THE word *cefs* is, I believe, derived from *census*, a tax.

SECOND

S E C O N D C A R R I E R.

Lend thee my lantern!
Marry! I'll see thee *bang'd* first.

From the pitiful ambition of pleasing the upper gallery, and getting their hands, the actor of the Carrier too often alters the word *bang'd* to *damn'd*.

Enter Chamberlain.

Chamberlain was a kind of upper servant, formerly belonging to inns on the road, who attended and waited on travellers as the chambermaids do now. Their office, I believe, extended to the care of every thing belonging to coaches and carriages, which is at present the business of the book-keeper.

G A D S H I L L.

I am joined with no foot-land-rakers.

Such, I believe, as Falstaff termed, in a preceding scene,

Thieves of the day's beauty.

I D E M.

Such as can hold in.

This is certainly very obscure. I think Mr. Steevens's 'Such as can curb our old father antic the law' is nearer the author's sense than Mr. Tollet's explanation. By *bold in* is understood *bold fast*. 'Such associates have I,' says Gadshill, 'as can maintain their robberies, and will not part with their booty.'

F A L S T A F F.

Hang ye, gorbellied knaves,

Not content with explaining the word *gorbellied* by fat and corpulent, which, I believe, every reader of Shakspeare understands without instruction, Mr. Steevens not only refers us to Bishop Kennet's Parochial Antiquities, but lugs in three or four authorities from old plays. Thus is the margin sometimes enlarged to very little purpose.

Scene

Scene III. Hotspur, solus.

H O T S P U R.

Have I not all their letters to meet me in arms by the ninth of next month ?

This scene was necessary, to acquaint the audience with the progress of the insurrection projected by the Percys in the last scene of the first act.

L A D Y P E R C Y.

O my good lord ! why are you thus alone ? —
 Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks ;
 And giv'n my treasures and my rights of thee
 To thick-ey'd musing and curs'd melancholy ?

Lady Percy's speech is an excellent comment upon Brutus's description of the mind of man when labouring with the impression of a conspiracy :

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
 And the first motion, all the interim
 Is like a phantasm or a hideous dream.

Small matters, they say, often serve as preludes to mighty quarrels. In the year 1746, this play was acted at the theatre in

Drury-lane, Barry was the Hotspur ; a very beautiful and accomplished actress condescended, in order to give strength to the play, to act the trifling character of Lady Percy ; Berry was the Falstaff. The house was far from crowded ; for the public could no more bear to see another Falstaff, while Quin was on the stage, than they would now flock to see a new Shylock, as long as Macklin continues to have strength fit to represent ‘ *the Jew which Shakspeare drew.*’

A very celebrated comic actress triumphed in the barrenness of the pit and boxes ; she threw out some expressions against the consequence of the Lady Percy. This produced a very cool, but cutting, answer from the other ; who reminded the former of her playing, very lately, to a much thinner audience, one of her favourite parts. And now, the ladies not being able to restrain themselves within the bounds of cool conversation, a most terrible fray ensued. I do not believe that they went
 fo

so far as pulling of caps, but their altercation would not have disgraced the females of Billingsgate. While the two great actresses were thus entertaining each other in one part of the green-room, the admirer of Lady Percy, an old gentleman who afterwards bequeathed her a considerable fortune, and the brother of the comic lady, were more seriously employed. The cicisbeo struck the other with his cane: thus provoked, he very calmly laid hold of the old man's jaw. 'Let go my jaw, you villain!' and 'Throw down your cane, fir!' were repeatedly echoed by the combatants. — Barry, who was afraid lest the audience should hear full as much of the quarrel as of the play, rushed into the green-room, and put an end to the battle. The print-sellers laid hold of this dispute, and published a print called 'The Green-room Scuffle.'

Prince

Prince Henry and Poins.

PRINCE HENRY.

I am now of all humours that have shewed themselves
humours since the old days of goodman Adam.

This is the genuine language of a young
man whose body is vigorous and mind ac-
tive; who, having more spirits than he
knows what to do with, and not being en-
gaged by noble exercises or generous pur-
suits, spends his hours in idleness and fro-
lic.

Rivo. Here we have five authorities,
from old plays, to justify Shakspeare's use
of the word *rivo*.

PRINCE HENRY.

Pitiful-hearted Titan! who melted at the tale of the
fun.

It is impossible to make sense of this pas-
sage as it now stands; Mr. Steevens's resto-
ration from the old copy, which plainly
refers to the story of Phaeton prevailing
on Titan to give him the management of
his

his chariot for a day, is, I think, extremely happy.

FALSTAFF.

I would I were a weaver ; I could sing all manner of songs.

It is a common expression this day, in Scotland, to say ‘ psalm-singing weavers.’ Clement Marot, who is justly esteemed the first poet of his time, and who died in 1544, translated the psalms into French metre. It was not uncommon to set them to music and sing them at the court of Francis I. The Protestants of Calvin’s persuasion had many of them set to various tunes, and sang them in their churches. Those, who were exiled on the repeal of the edict of Nantz, sang them in all the countries where they were received : in England, Holland, and several parts of Germany.

IDEM.

Were I at the strapado, I would not tell you on compulsion,

The

The punishment of the *strapado*, as put in practice at Venice in the days of Shakspeare, is thus described by Tom Coriat :

“ The offender, having his hands bound behind him, is conveyed into a rope that hangeth by a pulley ; after which he is raised up by two several swings, where he sustaineth so great torment, that his joints are for a time loosed and pulled asunder ; besides which, abundance of blood is gathered into his hands and face. And, for the time he is in the torture, his hands and face look as red as blood.”

F A L S T A F F.

By the Lord, I knew you as well as he that made you.

The players have, from time immemorial, substituted in this place something of their own, which, I believe, the severest critic will not only pardon, but confess that it heightens the mirth of the scene, and gives a stronger colour to the high-seasoned

soned impudence of the fat knight. While the Prince and Poins are teasing Falstaff to give a plain answer to the proofs they produce of his cowardice, he is busy in hatching up a laugh, in the discharge of which he breaks out into this unexpected interrogation: —— ‘What! do you think I did not know you? By the Lord, I knew you as well as he that made you.’

It is confessed, by all the world, that there is an uncommon force and versatility in the mirth of Falstaff which is superior to all that dramatic poetry has hitherto invented. Prince Henry’s conversation is not without wit, and abounds in easy pleasantry and a gay turn: but the Prince stands not in need of that ready power of repartee, that impenetrable shield of inventive audacity, and that ability to shift his ground continually to ward off the blows, to which the lies of Falstaff incessantly expose him. The jolly knight is never in a state of humiliation; he generally rises
superior

superior to attack, and gets the laugh on his side in spite of truth and conviction. It was by this kind of invincible courage in conversation, as well as the quickness of his conception and brilliancy of his fancy, that Foote, without the help of Jack Falstaff's lies, was enabled to rise up and win the field when his opponents imagined he was laid flat and conquered outright. Garrick had a great share of wit, as well as fine animal spirits; but a smart blow of a repartee would silence him for the evening. If suffered to take the lead, he was highly entertaining; but he could not bear interruption.

I D E M.

You must to the court in the morning.

This is a preparation for the ensuing pathetic scene between the King and Prince.

P R I N C E H E N R Y.

Do thou stand for my father, and examine me upon the particulars of my life.

The

The following mock-representation of an interview between the Prince and his father is generally left out on the stage, as an incumbrance to the action. It has been occasionally revived, but never produced the effect which the admirers of Shakspeare expected. It is certainly managed with great art, and larded with wit and humour; but it is not heightened with incident, nor stuffed with that high jocularity which throws an audience into fits of laughter.

F A L S T A F F.

And I will do it in King Cambyfes' vein.

Shakspeare ridicules, in this passage, an old play, of one Thomas Preston, called 'A lamentable Tragedy, mixed full with Mirth, containing the Life of Cambyfes, King of Persia.'

A taste of this author's poetry will afford a specimen of the miserable trash our ancestors were forced to swallow down. — Tragi-comedy was then the taste of the nation,

nation, as it continues to be now, for the excellency of Shakspeare's genius has fixed it upon us. Nor is it very strange, when we see the politest people in Europe obliged to tack a diverting petite pièce to make a tragedy palatable to the audience. The Spaniards, too, will not be satisfied without a dash of buffoonry added to their more serious pieces.

Extract from *Cambyfes*.

My council grave and sapient,
 With lords of legal train,
 Attentive ears towards us bend,
 And hear what shall be said :
 So you, likewise, my valiant knight,
 Whose manly acts doth fly,
 By bruit of fame, the sounding trump
 Doth pierce the azure sky.

The last editors have quoted a line or two of this curious piece ; I thought a little larger sample would do justice to the genius of Master Preston. Mr. Steevens relates, that Queen Elizabeth was so well pleased with his acting a part before her

at

at the university of Cambridge, that she settled 20l. per annum on Preston; and this, he says, was little more than 1s. per diem. In those days of strict œconomy, 20l. was a considerable pension: I question if Roger Ascham's stipend was more than twice that sum, who was the queen's preceptor in the learned languages.

F A L S T A F F.

If sack and sugar be a fault.

At this distance of time, it is not an easy matter to determine what sort of wine this sack was, of which our ancestors were so fond. By the knight's mixing it with sugar, it can scarcely answer Dr. Johnson's definition, who calls it 'a sweet wine chiefly brought from the Canaries.' Minshew derives the word *sack* from *seccare*, *propter magnam seccandi humores facultatem*: to this derivation Falstaff would himself have no objection. Skinner thinks the word *sack* takes its name from the Spanish *secco*, *dry*, having a rough and sharp quality. The

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conjecture

conjecture of Mandelſo is, that *sack* is derived from *Xeque*, a city of Mauritania, and thence transplanted into Spain. After all, the same learned Dr. Skinner calls sherry *sherry-sack*, a well-known wine, derived from *Xeres*, formerly *Eſcuris*, in the province of Andalusia. Falstaff himself, in his profuse commendations of sherry, terms it 'a good sherris-sack,' as if there were two sorts of sack, and he gave the preference to the sherris. Blount, in his *Glossography*, says, 'that sherris-sack is so called from *Xeres*, a sea-town of *Cor-duba*, in Spain, where that kind of sherris is made.'

That the sack, of which our ancestors drank, had a tartness in it, seems evident from their mixing sugar with it. All wine-merchants, as well as old toppers, are agreed, that at present we have none of that excellent sherry which was drunk so plentifully about forty or fifty years since, and which was called *Bristol milk*, from a common practice of the inhabitants of that city,

city, who generously presented strangers with a glass of that pleasant wine.

The liquor, which Homer pours out so abundantly, is old wine, and yet he calls it *ηδύς*, *dulcis*.

ΟΙΝΟΙΟ ΠΑΛΑΙΣ ΗΔΥΠΟΤΟΙΣ.

ODYSSE. Lib. II.

It cannot be supposed that old wine could really be sweet wine, because age gives it a tartness. It is observed, by a French critic, that the word *ηδύς*, or *dulcis*, should be translated *pleasant*, or *agreeable*; because, says he, that sharpness, which was the consequence of wine's being kept long, seemed to be a quality very agreeable to the ancients. *Hist. crit. de la République des Lettres*, tom. I. p. 240.

For some time after the union of the king's and duke of York's companies of comedians, Betterton, with general approbation, acted Hotspur; a character which, according to the laws established then by the lord-chamberlain, he was not permitted to attempt

during the time Hart continued to act; the play of Henry IV. First Part, being assigned to the king's company. Towards the decline of his life, Betterton relinquished Hotspur to try his abilities in Falstaff; and, in this change of character, his powers of pleasing did not forsake him; being a perfect master of his profession, he wore the sock with as much ease and grace as the buskin. With the greatest stock of merit, this consummate comedian possessed an equal share of modesty. He was ever open to advice, and refused it from no man who offered it.

In the beginning of this, or the end of the last, century, Ben Jonson, the actor, took a trip to Dublin, where his great merit gained him much applause with considerable profit.

There he saw a comic actor whom he much admired, one Baker, a master-paviour of Dublin. He excelled in Sir Epicure Mammon in the Alchemist, in the Spanish Friar, and more especially in Falstaff.

staff. Baker would study his parts while surveying his workmen in the streets. This practice was once the occasion of a very whimsical adventure. Two of his men, who had been lately hired from Chester and were strangers to their new master's custom, observing one day his countenance and gestures, while talking to himself, imagined that he was seized with madness. He, on taking notice of their attention, bade them mind their business. They obeyed, — but still kept a watchful eye on him, who was rehearsing to himself the part of Falstaff. He was in that scene where the knight surveys the dead body of Sir Walter Blunt,—and saying, *Who have we here, Sir Walter Blunt? There's honour for you!* Upon this, the fellows laid hold of their master, and, by the help of the by-standers, tied him hand and foot, and, in spite of his resistance, carried him home with a great mob at his heels*.

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Jonson

* Chetwood's History of the Stage.

Jonson communicated to Betterton this actor's manner of personating Falstaff, which he not only approved, but adopted; and frankly owned that the paviour's drawing of Sir John was more characteristical than his own.

George Powell, who was malicious enough to envy this great actor, and weak enough to think himself capable of supplying his place, during the life of Betterton acted Falstaff in his particular manner; and, to take all advantages, he mimicked him in those acute pains of the gout which sometimes surprised him in the time of action.

Since the death of Betterton, in April, 1710, many comedians of Drury-lane Theatre have tried their skill in Falstaff; but most of them with very indifferent success. By the particular command of Queen Anne, Booth ventured to put on the habit of Falstaff, for *one night only*. That he did not venture a second attempt might be owing either to a conscious deficiency to
assume

assume Falstaff's humour, or a predilection for Hotspur in the same play. The elder Mills would likewise try his skill in comic archery, and handled, for a few nights, this bow of Ulysses. But, alas, in vain! His sober gravity could not reach the inimitable mirth of this stage-prodigy. Harper's fat figure, full voice, round face, and honest laugh, rather than his intelligence, fixed him at last in the jolly knight's easy chair.

The company of comedians which began to act under the management of John Rich, from a patent of Charles II. in 1715, though consisting of some good old players, from recruits picked up from all parts of the country, and the discontents of Drury-lane, were, for a long time, unable to cope with the established comedians of the last-mentioned theatre. Lincoln's-inn Fields house was finely decorated. The scenes were new. The stage was more extended than that of the rival theatre, and superbly adorned with looking-glasses on both sides of the stage; a circumstance, which Quin

said was an excellent trap to catch actresses who admired their persons more than their profession of acting. But, when the novelty was worn away, the audiences forsook the new company for their old friends at Drury-lane.

The first play acted at Lincoln's-inn Fields, which fixed the attention of the public, was *The merry Wives of Windsor*. This comedy was so perfectly played in all its parts, that the critics in acting universally celebrated the merit of the performers*. The characters were so well adapted to the abilities of the actors, that no play had been represented with equal skill and propriety at that theatre.

The great applause Quin gained in this, the feeblest portrait of Falstaff, encouraged him

* Falstaff, Quin; Ford, Ryan; Page, Ogden; Sir Hugh Evans, Hipposley; Justice Shallow, Boheme; Slender, Christopher Bullock; Host of the Garter, old Bullock; Dr. Caius, Eggleton; Mrs. Ford, Mrs. Seymour; Mrs. Page, Mrs. Bullock; Mrs. Quickly, Mrs. Eggleton.

him to venture on the most high-seasoned part of the character, in The First Part of Henry IV. Of this large compound of lies, bragging and exhaustless fund of wit and humour, Quin possessed the ostensible or mechanical part in an eminent degree. In person he was tall and bulky: his voice strong and pleasing: his countenance manly, and his eye piercing and expressive. In scenes, where satire and sarcasm were poignant, he greatly excelled; particularly in The Witty Triumph over Bardolph's carbuncles, and the fooleries of the hostess. In the whole part he was animated, though not equally happy. His supercilious brow, in spite of assumed gaiety, sometimes unmasked the furliness of his disposition; however, he was, notwithstanding some faults, esteemed the most intelligent and judicious Falstaff since the days of Betterton. Berry, who succeeded Quin at Drury-lane, was neither exact in his outline nor warm in his colouring. He was, indeed, the Falstaff of a beer-house;

house; while the *other* was the dignified President, were the choicest viands and the best liquors were to be had. Love, who came next in order at Drury-lane, wanted not a good share of vis comica, and laughed with ease and gaiety. To pass by Ned Shuter's exhibition of this favourite part would be unpardonable. What Ned wanted in judgement he supplied by archness and drollery. He enjoyed the effects of his roguery with a chuckle of his own compounding, and rolled his full eye, when detected, with a most laughable effect. Woodward and Yates put on Falstaff's habit for one night only. Their respect for the judgement of the audience prevented their assuming the boldness of the character. I think their diffidence was greater than their deficiencies. These excellent comic actors might, by repeated practice, have reached the mark which they modestly despaired to hit.

The present age has, in my opinion, produced a Falstaff who has more of the pleasant

pleasant and gay features of the character than any actor I have yet seen. I know very well that some of the surviving companions of Quin will pronounce it theatrical treason to suppose that it was possible for this character to survive their departed friend. But Nature is not so niggardly in her productions. The rising generation may see new Garricks, Barrys, Cibbers, and Quins. While I am writing this, a great and admirable genius has struck the world with admiration. — Mrs. Siddons is the lawful successor of our most perfect actresses. Much is said of old schools and new schools in acting: this lady is the great ornament of Nature's school, which will eternally be the same.—But to return to my subject.

Henderson had many difficulties to conquer before he could bring Falstaff within his grapple: neither in person, voice, nor countenance, did he seem qualified for the part. By the assistance of a most excellent judgement

judgement he has contrived to supply all deficiencies: In the impudent dignity, if I may be allowed the expression, of the character, Quin greatly excelled all competitors. In the frolicksome, gay, and humorous, situations of Falstaff, Henderson is superior to every man.

From his figure, and other outward accomplishments, Falstaff seems to have courted Quin to embrace him; while Henderson was obliged to force him into his service. Quin's supercilious manner was of use to him in scenes where he wished to overawe his companions into compliance with his humour. Henderson's gay levity was best suited to midnight pleasure and riotous mirth.

The master-action of Quin was the detection of his cowardice by the prince and Poins, in the second Act; and though, in this, Henderson shews much art and true humour, yet his soliloquy in describing his ragamuffin regiment, and his enjoying

joying the misfise of the king's prefs-mo-
ney, are fo truly excellent, that they are
not inferior to any comic representation
of the ftage.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIII.

Mortimer, Hotspur, and Owen Glendower.

— *The scene between them generally omitted in representation. — Meaning of the word lewd. — Courtesy from heaven. — Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone. — Robe pontifical. — Favours in a bloody mask explained. — Curious extract from Hollingshead. — Observation on the interview between the king and prince. — Wilks, his excellence in the prince of Wales. — Mr. Lewis and Mr. Palmer. — The inside of a church, — A brewer's horse, — Artificial noses, — Stew'd prunes, — and the word quailing, explained. — Nimbleness of Prince Henry. — Accurate account of the ostrich. — Death of Hotspur. — Falstaff and Hotspur. — The difficulty of raising a dead body on a living shoulder. — Henderson and Smith.*

Act

Act III. Scene I. Hotspur, Worcester, Mortimer, Glendower.

THIS Interview of the principal conspirators has been often presented to the public, but could not preserve a permanent station on the stage. It seems of great use in the œconomy of the play, to unfold the progress of the rebellion, and to display the passions and interests of the several persons concerned in it. By the amputation of this scene, Hotspur's part appeared to be so maimed, that Mr. Garrick insisted on its being revived. However, after the first or second night's acting, finding that it produced no effect, he consented to omit it. If I remember right, Colley Cibber formerly played Owen Glendower. The necromantic forgeries and vain boastings of the Welchman are well contrasted with the blunt humour and contemptuous disdain of Hotspur.

Scene

Scene II. King and Prince of Wales.

K I N G.

To punish my mistreadings !

In this, and the former part of the speech, where Henry speaks of the displeasing service he had done, Shakspeare, I believe, alludes to his deposing and murdering of Richard II. The poet, agreeably to history, makes him keep his great offences to his sovereign constantly in mind; and Henry's continual compunction and remorse lessens our hatred to the usurper.

I D E M.

—— Such lewd, such mean, attempts !

The word *lewd* has, in Shakspeare, various meanings; such as *impudent*, *illiberal*, *licencious*, and *wanton*. Verstegan proves that it originally signified *ignorant*; here, as Mr. Steevens observes, it stands for *licencious*.

I D E M.

And then I stole all courtesy from heaven.

Mr.

Mr. Steevens has justified Dr Warburton, who says our poet in this alludes to the story of Prometheus stealing fire from heaven, by producing a parallel passage from Massinger's Duke of Florence, which proves this author understood it in that sense, by using the very words of Shakspeare. But Mr. Malone denies that Shakspeare dreamt in the least of the fable of Prometheus, and insists that Henry means that he robbed heaven of its worship, as he did his fellow-subjects of their allegiance.

This is certainly more than the author intended. Courtesy for devotion is surely somewhat strained. The progress, from courtesy to humility, is natural enough; that Prometheus's stealing fire from heaven was not unfamiliar to Shakspeare, can be proved from a similar expression in Othello.

—But once put out thy light,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling Nature,
I know not where is that *Promethean* heat
That can thy light relumine!

O'THELLO, A&V.

I D E M.

My presence, like a robe pontifical.

Such as popes, patriarchs, and archbishops, wear only at high mass.

Lord Bolingbroke on being once present at high mass, in the church of Notre Dame in Paris, was so greatly delighted with the high ceremony and solemn music, that he declared, if he had been king of France, he would also have officiated as pontiff,

P R I N C E O F W A L E S.

Stain my favours in a bloody mask!

This is to be understood in the same sense as the following passage relating to the same prince of Wales in Richard II. Act V. of whom, it is said, that he declared,

———He would unto the stewe,
And from the common'st creature pluck a glove,
And wear it as a favour, and with that
He would unhorse the lustiest challenger.

This admirable scene between King Henry and his son owes its origin to a very extraordinary

extraordinary and pathetic interview of these great personages, which happened about a year before the death of the king. Shakspeare does not always observe the order of time, but frequently selects situations and events to suit his own plan. The particulars are thus recorded by Hollinghead and Stowe.

“ That Henry, Prince of Wales, being informed, that certain ill-minded persons had not only spread abroad very ill reports of him, but had endeavoured to sow dissension between the king, his father, and himself; he wrote public letters to clear his reputation; and, to free himself the better from such aspersions, on the 29th of June, 1412, he came to the court with certain noblemen and others his friends. — He was dressed in a gown of blue sattin, full of small eyelets, at every hole the needle hanging by a silk thread. About his arm he wore a hound's collar set full of SS of gold. The court was then at Westminster. The retinue of the prince, in obe-

dience to his commands, would advance no farther than the fire-place, though frequently requested by the lords in waiting. The prince himself, accompanied with some of the king's household, was admitted to his royal father; who, in the presence of three or four persons, commanded him to tell the cause of his coming to him.

“The prince, kneeling down before his father, said, — Most redoubted and sovereign lord and father, I am at this time come to your presence as your liegeman and your natural son, in all things to be at your commandment; and, whereas I understand you have in suspicion my demeanor against your grace, you know very well, that, if I knew any man in this realm of whom you should stand in fear, my duty were to punish that person, thereby to remove that grief from your heart; then how much more ought I suffer death to ease your grace of that grief which you have of me, being your natural son and liegeman; and to that end I have
made

made myself ready, by confessing and receiving the sacrament; and therefore I beseech you, most redoubted lord and dear father, for the honour of God, to ease your heart of all such suspicion you have of me, and to dispatch me here with this same dagger, (and withal delivered to the king his dagger in all humble reverence, adding farther, that his life was not so dear to him that he wished to live one day with his displeasure;) and, therefore, in thus ridding me out of life, and yourself from all suspicion, here, in presence of these lords, and before God, at the day of the general judgement, I faithfully protest clearly to forgive you.

“ The king, herewith moved, cast from him the dagger, and, embracing the prince, kissed him; and, with shedding tears, confessed that indeed he had him partly in suspicion, though now, as he perceived, not with just cause; and from thenceforth no report should have him in

S 3. mistrust;

mistrust; and this he promised from his honour."

In this scene, between the King and Prince, Shakspeare has not used one harsh or obscure word; the language is clear, flowing, and majestic, well adapted to character. Though it is little more than a fine picture of still life, not blended with pity or terror, the great ingredients of tragic passion, by the admirable skill of the writer it is rendered abundantly interesting and affecting.

I have already observed that Wintershul, who first acted the King after the Restoration, was a comedian of merit. Cibber draws a masterly picture of Kynaston's behaviour in this scene, to which I must refer the reader.

The elder Mills wanted dignity of deportment necessary to represent the grandeur and majesty of the character, which were eminently supplied by Boheme. — Hayard was decent, but without spirit; Bentley is chiefly deficient in person. —

The

The Prince of Wales by Wilks was one of the most perfect exhibitions of the theatre. Wilks threw aside the libertine gaiety of Hal, when he assumed the princely deportment of Henry. At the Boar's Head he was lively and frolicsome; in the reconciliation with his father, his penitence was gracefully becoming, and his resolution of amendment manly and affecting. In his challenge of Hotspur, his defiance was equally gallant and modest. In his combat with that nobleman, his fire was tempered with moderation, and his reflections on the death of the great rebel, generous and pathetic. The Hotspur of Booth, though a noble portrait of courage, humour, and gallantry, was not superior to the Prince of Wales by Wilks. It is no disgrace to Mr. Lewis and Mr. Palmer, who are both actors of great merit, and deserve much commendation in their several representations of Prince Henry, to be inferior to the accomplished Wilks.

F A L S T A F F.

And I have not forgotten the inside of a church I am a pepper-corn, a brewer's horse! The inside of a church!

It requires no sagacity to see that the *inside of a church* is not one of his vile comparisons, as Prince Henry termed the knight's similes in a former scene; it is certainly a repetition of his confessing that he was utterly unacquainted with any place of devotion. — I believe, in the days of Shakspeare, brewers horses did not resemble those of our days; they were probably poor jades, worn out with service; and therefore the comparison of the fat Falstaff with a lean Rosinante is not so idle. In the reign of Henry IV. the business of brewing was carried on by females.* Whether the men chiefly employed themselves, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, in the occupation of brewing, I know not.

H O S T E S S.

* Henry's History of Great-Britain.

H O S T E S S.

You owe me money, Sir John; and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it.

This is a good preparative for the arrest of Falstaff in the Second Part of Henry IV.

F A L S T A F F.

Let him coin his nose.

In Shakspeare's time, a large carbuncled nose was a richer joke than it is now, as may appear from this farcistical description of one by Falstaff. For such characters as the Jew of Malta and Bardolph, the actors made use of artificial noses*.

I D E M.

There is no more faith in thee than in a *flewed prune*.

To explain at full what is meant by *flewed prunes*, Mr. Steevens has given no less than fourteen authorities from old books and plays. I would recommend to that gentleman to be content with one half of

* Vide Mr. Read's note on a passage in the Jew of Malta;

of these quotations ; which, with Dr. Farmer's account of the price of a stewed prune, will, I think, satisfy every reasonable man.

Act IV. Scene I.

H O T & B U R .

There is no *quailing* now.

The word *quailing* is very expressive, and taken from the nature of the *quail* ; which of all birds is one of the most timorous as well as lascivious.

“ The Arabs, says Dr. Shaw, do not spring game with dogs ; but, shading themselves with a piece of canvas stretched upon two reeds into the shade of a door, they walk through avenues where they expect to find it. The canvas is usually spotted, or painted with the figure of a leopard ; and, a little below the top, there is one or more holes, for the fowler to look through and see what passes before him. Quails, and such-like birds as do not feed in flocks, will, upon sight of the canvas, *stand still and look astonished*.

astonished. This gives the sportsman an opportunity of coming very near them; and then, resting the canvas upon the ground, and directing the muzzle of his piece through one of the holes, knocks down sometimes a whole covey of them."

Shaw's Travels.

With the Egyptians, the quail was an emblem of impiety; the voice of that bird was supposed to be displeasing to the gods.

Scene IV.

W O R C E S T E R.

We of the offering side.

That is, we who make proposals for alteration of government, and offer new terms to the people: such as a king with a juster title to the crown than he has whom we call usurper; and many other new articles to gain the public favour and assistance,

H O T S P U R.

H O T S P U R .

The nimble-footed mad-cap Prince of Wales.

Shakspeare rarely bestows his epithets at random, says Mr. Steevens. Mr. Bowle had made an observation something like this upon a similar passage in the second act of this play. But, although I am willing to grant his highness was as swift-footed as Achilles, yet I hope I shall be excused from giving credit to what is quoted gravely from an historian: for, if Hal himself would not believe that Hotspur could ‘ride up a hill perpendicular, and kill a sparrow flying,’—neither will I subscribe to a writer who tells us, that ‘Henry Prince of Wales, and his companions, would run after a stag, and take him, without hounds, or any weapon whatsoever.’

V E R N O N .

All plum’d like ostriches.

The best and most accurate account we have of the ostrich is to be found in Dr. Shaw’s

Shaw's Travels, which is indeed a good commentary on several verses of the 39th chapter of Job. As that learned writer's description is taken from his own personal knowledge, I shall quote a passage relating to the uncommon swiftness and beauty of the ostrich.

“ When any of these birds are surpris'd, by coming suddenly upon them, whilst they are feeding in some valley, or behind some rocky or small eminence in the deserts, they will not stay to be curiously viewed and examined ; neither are the Arabs dextrous enough to overtake them, though they are mounted upon their jinfes, or horses of family. *They, when they raise themselves up for flight, laugh at the horse and his rider.** They afford him an opportunity only of admiring, at a distance, the extraordinary agility, and the stateliness likewise, of their motions ; the richness of
their

* Job, ch. xxxix. verse 18.

their plumage, and the great propriety there was of ascribing to them *an expanded quivering wing*.* Nothing certainly can be more beautiful and entertaining than such a sight: the wings, by their repeated, though unwearied, vibrations, equally serving them for sails and oars; whilst their feet, no less assisting in conveying them out of sight, are no less insensible of fatigue." Shaw's Travels into Africa.

HOTSPUR.

Task'd the whole state.

Tasked is a word, in the old Chronicles, for *taxed*.

I D E M.

————— To seek out
This head of safety. —————

So Worcester, in the last scene of the first act:

And it is no little reason bids us speed,
To save our heads by raising of a head.

Act

* Verse 13.

Act V. Scene II.

PRINCE HENRY.

Heaven forbid a shallow scratch should drive
The Prince of Wales from such a field as this.

Henry was present, though then very young, being scarcely fifteen years of age, at the battle of Shrewsbury; where he fought bravely, and was wounded: he would not leave the field of battle, though earnestly intreated by several of the nobility.

I D R M.

And now two paces of the vilest earth
Is room enough. ———

————— *Idors sola fatetur*

Quantula fuit hominum corpuscula. ———

JUVENAL, Sat. X.

The King, according to Hall, who is copied by Hollingshead, fought very stoutly, and killed, with his own hand, thirty-six of the rebels. Though the same authors express themselves somewhat obscurely,

scurely, yet we may gather from the context that Percy was slain by the Prince of Wales. Stowe says, that Hotspur, running forward amongst the thickest of the enemy, was slain.

F A L S T A F F.

Therefore, sirrah, with a new wound in your thigh,
&c.

A man of genius has taken pains to rescue the character of Falstaff from the charge of cowardice; * not considering, that, if the knight is proved to be a man of courage, half the mirth he raises is quite lost and misplaced. The Prince and Poins obtained, by their contrivance, such evident proofs of his dastardly spirit, that the whole mirth, in the admired scene of his detected tergiversation, depends upon it. Old Jack is so fairly hunted down, by the plain tale and keen reproaches of the Prince, that he is reduced to the necessity of

* Essay on the Character of Falstaff.

of excusing his want of courage, by, attributing his fear to instinct : but, if any proof of his timidity be yet wanting, we have, in this scene, such as bids defiance to all question ; for Falstaff, not satisfied with seeing the dead body of Percy before him, to make all sure, wounds the corpse in the thigh. Nobody, I believe, is angry that he afterwards swears he killed him. I cannot think the author of the Essay on the Character of Falstaff intended any thing more, by his argument, than to convince the public that he was very competent to support any hypothesis by brilliancy of wit and plausibility of argument.

I D E M.

I'll follow, as they say, for the hope of reward !

No joke ever raised such loud and repeated mirth, in the galleries, as Sir John's labour in getting the body of Hotspur on his back. If Hotspur and Falstaff had been on ill terms, or any quarrel had taken place between them, the hero, if he was

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fo

so inclined, could have teased the fat knight in such a manner as to have given him no little vexation. How Booth and Harper managed this pantomimic scene is not very easy to tell. Booth's weight and roundness of figure would render the bulky Harper's lifting him on his back worse than walking a hundred yards on uneven ground. Quin had little or no difficulty in perching Garrick upon his shoulders, who looked like a dwarf on the back of a giant. But, oh! how he tugged and toiled to raise Barry from the ground! As they were rivals, and sometimes jarred, we may, without breach of charity, suppose, that Hotspur sometimes enjoyed the sweat of Falstaff. If the dead man was not friendly to the living, he might have made the weighing him up an Herculean labour.

At length this upper-gallery merriment was done away by the difficulties which Henderson encountered in getting Smith on his shoulders. So much time was consumed

fumed in this pick-a-pack business, that the spectators grew tired, or rather disgusted. It was thought best, for the future, that some of Falstaff's ragamuffins should bear off the dead body.

Scene the last.

K I N G.

Ill-spirited Worcester, did we not send grace,
Pardon, and love, to all of you —

This reproof of Worcester's malignity is agreeable to historical fact.

T 2

King

King Henry IV. Second Part.

CHAPTER XIV.

Second Part of Henry IV. owing to the Success of the first.—When registered.—Shakespeare's age.—Ben Jonson.—Rumour.—Dr. Johnson's distribution of certain lines.—Mandrake explained.—Walkers in St. Paul's.—All single combatants give the lie.—Remark on the word old.—The original actor of Falstaff.—Hunt Counter.—Single wit.—Roman the actor.—Text restored.—Queen and Queller.—Fustilarian.—Cards eaten by a gamester.—Proposed alteration of the text.—Lady Percy and Northumberland.—Pistol and Theophilus Cibber.—Stage Mutineers.—Oversight of the author.—Death of Glendower.

THE

THE success of the First Part of Henry IV. must have been uncommon, for it appears, from Mr. Malone's Chronological series of our author's plays, that it was entered into the Stationers books in the beginning of the year 1598, entitled the History of Henry IV. The writer did not, at that time, perhaps, foresee that he should be encouraged to continue the story. However, the Second Part of Henry IV. was registered, in the same books, in the beginning of the year 1599. Shakspeare was not more than thirty-four years old when these admirable productions of his genius were exhibited. If I could possibly envy the pleasure which the audiences enjoyed in old times, it would be for that inconceivable delight which intelligent auditors must have felt at the first acting of Shakspeare's noblest dramas. Methinks I see and hear the tumultuous joy and thundering applause which the unparalleled character

of Falstaff must have afforded at his first representation! A character, so superior to the conception of the brightest fancy, must have struck them with astonishment! To have seen Ben Jonson, with an assumed countenance of gaiety, and with envy in his heart, join the groupe of laughers and applauders, must have added to the pleasure of our author's real friends and admirers.

The Prologue.

Rumour is so easy and plain a *stop*,

————— The wavering multitude

Can play upon it.

Rumour is here compared to a musical instrument. So Hamlet, in shewing a flute to Guildenstern :

Can you play upon this pipe?

Why, 'tis as easy as lying.

Look you, *these are the stops.*

Act I. Scene I.

N O R T H U M B E R L A N D.

————— Every minute now

Should be the father of some stratagem.

That

That is, should bring forth some great event.

I D E M.

—— Ha! —— Again! ——

Said he young Harry Percy's spur was cold?

Northumberland, by the word *again*, calls upon Travers to repeat what the man on horseback said of Harry Percy.

I D E M.

So looks the strond, whereon th'imperious flood
Hath left a witness'd usurpation,

The mind's distress, when strongly pictured on the countenance, is finely expressed by Otway, in his *Venice Preserved*.

Then, Jaffier, shouldst thou not wear
Those *seals of woe* upon thy face.

N O R T H U M B E R L A N D.

Yet, for all this, say not that Percy's dead!

Dr. Johnson would give this line to Bardolph: however, he does not offer to alter the text, but candidly proposes a mode of distributing the parts of the speech, which he thinks belong to several interlocutors.

lieved it grew only at places of excretion, out of the urine and fat of the dead; that, in eradication, it sickened; and that it brought calamity on such as pulled or dug it up: to prevent which disasters, Pliny gives directions at large to be observed in pulling it.

Cunning impostors have confirmed these errors, by choosing forked roots out of it, and carving, in some, the generative parts of men; in others, those of women; and putting into small holes, made in proper places, the grains of millet, barley, or the like, and setting them in a moist place till they grew and sent forth blades; which, when dried, look like hair. For the discovery of these cheats, we are beholden to Matthioli, Crollius, Sir Thomas Brown, and others. *Murphy's Lucian, note to Timon Misanthropos.*

Machiavel wrote a diverting, but very licentious, comedy, called *Mandragora*.

I D E M.

To bear a gentleman in hand.

To

To bear a gentleman in hand signifies not only keeping him in expectation, but also with the farther design not to comply with the gentleman's request.

I D E M.

I bought him in Paul's.

That is, *I picked him up there*. That St. Paul's Church-yard was, till the latter end of Queen Anne's reign, a common resort for all sorts of people we find from Pope's Essay on Criticism ;

Nor is Paul's church more free than Paul's Church-yard. In Shakspeare's time, it was not only a place for idle people, cheats, and knights of the post, but for politicians, courtiers, and others, who met there to hear court and city news, and discuss political matters. This information Osborne gives us, who was himself an ambulator in St. Paul's.

I D E M.

You lie in your throat if you say I am any other.

The lie direct preceded, or accompanied, all challenges from the combatants, with sand bags, to kings and emperors, who fought

mable, he was become so habituated to loose discourse and a profligate mode of living, that he could not reform. In short, says the chief justice, your wit is confined to one subject, you are a perfect stranger to reasoning on any topic, except that which is connected with luxury, and leads to the tavern or the bawdy-house.

The character of the chief justice, in this play, is that of grave dignity, and of authority tempered with lenity. It was rendered important, many years since, by Mr. Boman, the contemporary of Betterton; who maintained the serious deportment of the judge with the graceful ease of the gentleman.

Scene III. Archbishop of York, Hastings, Mowbray, and Lord Bardolph.

H A S T I N G S.

It never yet did hurt
To lay down likelihoods and forms of hope.

L O R D B A R D O L P H.

Yes, in this present quality of war,
Indeed of instant action.

Mr.

Mr. Pope altered the reading of the two last lines thus :

Yes, in this present quality of war,

~~Impede~~ the instant act.

Which, says Dr. Johnson, was silently embraced by Theobald, Sir T. Hanmer, and Dr. Warburton. But Dr. Johnson, with diffidence, proposes to read :

Yes, in this present quality of war,

Indeed of instant action.

Mr. Stevens thinks *impel* might be the word ; and Mr. Follet supposes *instant* might be admitted. I shall offer a very slight alteration, which may possibly restore the genuine reading :

Yes, in this present quality of war,

~~In deed~~ of instant action.

By dissolving the adverb, *indeed*, into the preposition *in* and the substantive *deed*, sense is made of the passage, without any violence to the text. " It certainly (says Lord Bardolph) is hurtful to build upon fortuitous hopes, if by them we are tempted into action unprepared."

Act

ACT II. Hostess and officers.

HOSTESS. *Enter Hostess*

I am undone by his going.

If Falstaff goes to the wars without paying me his debt, I shall be ruined.

FALSTAFF. *Enter Falstaff*

Throw the quean into the kennel.

Quean is a word seldom used now. It means, in general acceptation, a woman lewd in her person, and vociferous in her discourse. Originally, says Verstegan, it signified a barren old cow.

HOSTESS. *Enter Hostess*

Thou art a man queller.

The word *queller* was formerly written *cweller*, and signified a troubler or tormentor. Anciently, says Verstegan, it sometimes meant a hangman.

FALSTAFF. *Enter Falstaff*

Away, you scullion! you rampallian! you festilarian! I'll tickle your catastrophe!

This is certainly addressed to the hostess. Scullion is plain enough. Rampallian,

Mr.

Mr. Steevens says, is an old rampant prostitute; and, we may add, perhaps, a dealer in such goods. Fustilarian is a bitter sarcasm, signifying, from the word *fusty*, that she was stale and musty. The lady, in Gay's comedy of the Distressed Wife, calls her own and her husband's relations *old fusties*. As to *I'll tickle your catastrophe*, if we consider the speaker, and to whom it was spoken, the meaning may be easily guessed.

F A L S T A F F.

My lord, I will not undergo this *sneap*.

Mr. Pope has explained a *sneap* to be a rebuke. But Mr. Steevens, not content with this, has (besides referring us to Ray's Proverbs) produced no less than three authorities to prove the same thing; for, what is to *check*, but to rebuke? *Sneap* has, by losing a letter, been changed into *snap*.——

H O S T E S S.

I hope you will come to supper.

VOL. I.

U

Here

Here this foolish woman is cajoled by the knight to increase her debt by pawning her plate,—and this is very easily accounted for, by resolving her behaviour into the power of custom. The hostess could not endure the melancholy thoughts of having her rooms unoccupied by her old guests, Falstaff and his companions.

SCENE II. Prince and Poins.

P O I N S.

I will steep this letter in sack, and make him eat it.

Mr. Steevens quotes the story of an apparitor who was obliged to eat a citation, wax and all, by the famous Robert Green. Modern times can produce nothing like this, except the contrivance of a noted gamester, who, being determined at all events to win a pretty large sum of money, resolved to destroy the evidence of a card against him; and, calling for two slices of bread and butter, and clapping the obnoxious witness between them, he fairly devoured it, and won the game.

PRINCE

PRINCE HENRY.

From a god to a bull ! a heavy descension !

The word *heavy* seems to convey no apposite meaning. I should imagine Shakespeare wrote *heavenly* descension, and the words which follow seem to justify this reading,—*It was Job's case*. It was a descent from heaven by Jupiter himself. *From a prince to a 'prentice, a low transformation*, seems to be contrasted with the former metamorphosis.

Scene III. Northumberland, Lady
Percy, &c.

LADY PERCY.

For those, who could speak low and tardily,
Would turn their own perfections to abuse
To seem like him.

This is the general practice of inferior minds, to catch at, and imitate, the defects of great spirits, because easily attained, rather than emulate their noble and generous qualities. This admirable speech of Lady Percy, in which she endeavours to

U 2

dissuade

diffuade Northumberland from joining the revoltors, by putting him in mind of Hotspur's fate, concludes with a most beautiful picture.

Had my sweet Harry had but half their numbers,
To-day might I, hanging on Hotspur's neck,
Have talk'd of Monmouth's grave!

N O R T H U M B E R L A N D .

I will resolve for Scotland.

Notwithstanding the Earl of Northumberland had been pardoned by the king, soon after the battle of Shrewsbury, his restless mind persisting in acts of rebellion, he determined to join Archbishop Scroope, but was prevented by forces sent against him, which apprehending he could not resist, he fled to Scotland; whence, after some little stay, he retired to Wales with Lord Bardolph. From Wales they marched into Yorkshire, and raised an army; but were opposed by the king's forces. Northumberland was killed in the battle of Bramham-more, and Lord Bardolph died of the wounds he received there.

Scene

Scene IV. Falstaff and Doll.

FALSTAFF.

A tame cheater, he.

By a very good note of Mr. Steevens on this passage, in which he quotes Mihil Mumchance, the gamesters were called *cheaters*, and the dice *cheters*. I suppose cheters were false dice, which in more modern times are called *the doctors*.

PISTOL.

Sweet knight, I kiss thy neif.

Neif is the Scotch word, at this day, for fist.

FALSTAFF.

A rascally slave! to brave me!

This scene presents us with a new character — Pistol! a coward, who talks big enough to frighten away fear. He is an excellent portrait of the sword and buckler men, or bravoes, of Queen Bess's days, who were ready to shew courage where no opposition would be made. These were the bullies in the houses of entertainment of our author's

time Pistol is a hero, where such as Bardolph, Nym, and Peto, are the underlings. He seems to be an obvious character; and yet it must be owned that no actor, however well instructed and judicious, has gained great applause in the representation of the burlesque and boisterous humour of Pistol since it was played by Theophilus Cibber. He assumed a peculiar kind of false spirit, and uncommon blustering, with such turgid action, and long unmeasurable strides, that it was impossible not to laugh at so extravagant a figure, with such loud and grotesque vociferation. He became so famous for his action in this part, that he acquired the name of Pistol, at first as a mark rather of merit, but finally as a term of ridicule. He was drawn in that character by Hogarth, with several other comedians who revolted from the patentees of Drury-lane in 1733, and was brought on the Covent-garden stage. He was not ill represented by Aston, a son of the famous Tony Aston, in a farce called *The Stage*

Stage Mutineers, in 1734.* The. Cibber acted Pistol when young, and Colley Cibber, his father, took unusual pains to instruct him.

U 4 C H A P -

* The first eight lines of the prologue to this forgotten piece have something in them like humour :

Britons attend !——Inspir'd, the poet sings
The fall of empires and the fate of kings !
Empires, by too much policy o'erthrown ;
And kings, expelled from kingdoms—not their own.
He sings no fables, but domestic jars,
Heroic dudgeons, and theatric wars :
Wars without armies, battles without blood,
For seas of pasteboard, and for realms of wood.

CHAPTER XV.

Mistake of Shakspeare.—Death of Glendower.—Shallow and Silence.—Mr. Steevens.—Proof that Falstaff was originally Sir John Oldcastle.—Sir Dagonet.—A fool not fit to represent one. — Justice Shallow. — John of Ghent and the great Duke of Marlborough. — Falstaff and Shallow. — Ben Jonson the actor. — Colley Cibber's art.—His admirable acting. — Treachery not stigmatized. — Who first beheaded prelates and burned heretics. — Miracles put to flight. — Falstaff's opinion of the effects of wine. — Fish diet. — Falstaff and Hippocrates. — Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Aristotle, and Dr. Falconer. — Duke of Clarence.—Crusade to Jerusalem. — King Henry's character.—Actors of King Henry and Prince of Wales.

Act III. Scene, king, &c.

K I N G.

Though then, Heav'n knows, I had no such intent.

SHAKSPEARE forgets that, before this interview between Richard and Northumberland, Henry had laid claim to the crown, and was proclaimed king.

W A R W I C K.

I have receiv'd

A certain instance that Glendower is dead.

Instance for information. Glendower was pardoned, at the request of David Holbeck, Esq. by the king; but, being driven to great straits, and reduced to wander from place to place, he perished for mere want.*

Scene II. Shallow, Silence.

S H A L L O W.

How does your fair daughter?

S I L E N C E.

Alas! a black ouzle,

My

* Stowe.

My daughter is so far from being fair, as you term her, that she is of a very dark complexion.

S H A L L O W.

And page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.

In a note on this passage, Mr. Reed brings some observations, from a poem of J. Weever, and a pamphlet called *The Travelling Jew*, which tend to prove that Shakspeare altered the name of Oldcastle to Falstaff. Mr. Steevens, as if the honour of Shakspeare were mightily concerned in this matter, sets himself with great vigour to oppose these proofs, and thinks it very strange that, because Shakspeare borrowed a single circumstance from the Life of the real Oldcastle, and imparted it to the fictitious Falstaff, it should be inferred that the name of the former should be a cover to the vices of the latter. But is it true that there is but one circumstance common to both knights? The contrary can, without much difficulty, be proved. That

Sir

Sir John Oldcastle, before the accession of Henry V. to the crown, was much about his person, nay, one of his domestics, we learn from the Life of that king, written in Latin by T. Livius. — *Erant namque, per id temporis, milites duo equestris ordinis, Joannes Oldcastle, (qui ante coronationem regis ab ipso, propter has opiniones, dimissus fuerat, et ab ejus famulatu penitus abjectus,) et Joannes Acton.*

That Sir John Oldcastle had been guilty of many and great irregularities, we have his own confession, in these words, recorded in Bale's Chronicle of his Life, "And with that he kneeled down on the pavement, holding up his hands towards heaven, and said, *I shrive * me here unto thee, my eternal living God, that, in my frail youth, I offended the Lord most grievously, in pride, wrath, and gluttony, in covetousness and lechery; many men have I hurt in mine anger, and done many other horrible sins.*"

Oldcastle

* Confess.

Oldcastle was extremely hateful to the clergy on many accounts: not content with censuring the doctrine, they preached, with unbounded freedom, he endeavoured to prove that they were become an order of men totally unnecessary, and a burden to the state. By reproaching them with their grandeur and magnificence, he plainly manifested that he would greatly lessen, if not entirely deprive, them of their revenues. He seems to have had, at least, full as much zeal as knowledge. When summoned before the heads of the church, he treated them with an asperity of language which no body of men would tolerate.

He told them at his trial; *'That they never followed Christ since the venom was shed in the church.'* When the archbishop of Canterbury asked him what he meant by that venom. He replied, *'Your possessions and lordships.'* he went on to say *'That Christ was poor and forgave. The pope is rich and a cruel manslayer. Rome is the very nest*

nest of Antichrist, and of that nest came all his disciples; of whom, prelates, priests, and monks, are the body, and these shaven friars the tail, which cover his most filthy part.'

Can we doubt that the clergy would embrace every opportunity to encourage such representations of Oldcastle's character as would tend to make him an object of scorn and ridicule? I am convinced that Oldcastle was made the jack-pudding in all the common interludes of public exhibition. He was a liar, a glutton, a profane swearer, and a coward; in short, any thing that might render him odious to the common people.

That Shakspeare found him such; it is reasonable to imagine, and that he adopted the name of Oldcastle in his first sketch of the scenes of licentious gaiety between the prince of Wales and the fat knight.

When the Reformation was established, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the Protestants claimed Oldcastle as a proto-martyr in their cause; consequently, all representations

presentations of him in a ludicrous light on the stage became offensive to serious people : and hence we may conclude, that, though Shakspeare had inadvertently been surprised into the use of Oldcastle's name, he soon relinquished it, by giving one less offensive to his favourite character.

M O U L D Y.

You shall have forty, sir.

You shall have an equal sum to what Bull-calf has offered ; four Harry, ten shillings, or forty shillings.

F A L S T A F F.

For you, Mouldy, stay at home till you are past service.

This is the second time Sir John has misused the king's press-money *damnably*, as he terms it. Modern times will furnish many instances of successful imitators of Jack Falstaff ; of men who have, as shamefully and with equal impunity, robbed the king and the people of their money.

S H A L L O W.

I was then Sir Dagonet in the play.

I be-

I believe Sir Arthur Addle, in the comedy of Sir Solomon Single, was taken from Sir Dagonet.

I do not entirely agree with Mr. Malone, that Shallow's acting Sir Dagonet was a proof of his folly; for he that performs the fool well is not a fool.

FALSTAFF.

He beat his own name.

John of Ghent, or Gaunt, was so named from Ghent, the place of his birth. But Ghent is pronounced as the French word *gans*, gloves. To this pun, I think, Falstaff alludes, and not to Shallow's being gaunt or lean. *The trussing him and his whole apparel into an ell-skin* seems to favour my conjecture. This sort of quibble was applied to the great Duke of Marlborough; who, at the close of the campaign in 1709, and on the eve of winter, having besieged and taken the same city of Ghent, the news-writers quaintly said, his Grace declared he could not at that time of the year cross the water without
Ghent,

*Ghent, or gloves, to keep him warm. —
Vide Annals of Queen Anne.*

In this scene Shakspeare exerts his power to support an equal comic vein with his dialogue in the first part of this history. It cannot be denied that, however rich the humour is in the former play, he shews little or no inferiority in this. Falstaff and Shallow form an admirable contrast: the barrenness of the country-squire sets off the fecundity of the knight. They are both egregious liars; and, though Falstaff's inventions are more fruitful in matter and brighter in fancy, the lies of Shallow, though of a colder complexion, entertain from their characteristic formation.

That Kempe acted Shallow originally, the diligence of Mr. Malone, I think, has proved. I do not see any authority to suppose that the second part of Henry IV. was revived, immediately after the Restoration, nor till about the middle or latter end of Queen Anne's

Anne's reign, when Dogget perforated Shallow.

When John Rich, Esq. opened his theatre in Lincoln's-inn-fields, in 1715, Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, the managers of Drury-lane, solicitous to retain in their service comedians of merit, paid a particular respect to B. Johnson the actor, and gave him, besides an addition to his income, such parts of Dogget (who had taken his leave of them) as were of most consequence and best adapted to his manner. Amongst the rest was the part of Justice Shallow. But Colley Cibber took such a fancy to the merry, ignorant, and foolish, old rake, that, upon Jonson's sudden illness, he made himself master of the part, and performed it so much to the satisfaction of the public, that he retained it as long as he remained upon the stage. Cibber, in his Apology, whether from real or affected modesty, alledges that he was, in most of his characters, no more than a close imitator of all such players as

had formerly represented them. This was the case in his Fondlewife; in which he copied so exactly the tone of voice, manner, and dress, of Dogget, that the audience, he says, at first believed him to be that celebrated comedian.

Whether he was a copy or an original in Shallow, it is certain that no audience was ever more fixed in deep attention, at his first appearance, or more shaken with laughter in the progress of the scene, than at Colley Cibber's exhibition of this ridiculous justice of peace. Some years after he had left the stage, he acted Shallow for his son's benefit. I believe in 1737, when Quin was the Falstaff, and Milward the king. Whether it was owing to the pleasure the spectators felt on seeing their old friend return to them again, *though for that night only*, after an absence of some years, I know not; but, surely, no actor or audience were better pleased with each other. His manner was so perfectly simple, his look so vacant, when he questioned his

Cousin

Cousin Silence about the price of ewes, and lamented, in the same breath, with silly surprise, the death of Old Double, that it will be impossible for any surviving spectator not to smile at the remembrance of it. The want of ideas occasions Shallow to repeat almost every thing he says. Cibber's transition from asking the price of bullocks, to trite, but grave, reflections on mortality, was so natural, and attended with such an unmeaning roll of his small pigs-eyes, accompanied with an important utterance of tick! tick! tick! not much louder than the balance of a watch's pendulum, that I question if any actor was ever superior in the conception or expression of such solemn insignificancy.

Jonson, a year or two after Cibber had left the stage, and, when he was between seventy and eighty, undertook the part of Shallow; and though the old hound had lost almost all his teeth, he was still so staunch, that he seized his game and held it fast.

It is true that, however chaste he was in his colouring and correct in his drawing, he wanted the high finishing and warm tints of Colley Cibber ; yet his acting was such as we may despair to see excelled, if equalled : for, though that excellent comedian, Mr. Yates, has often given great pleasure in Shallow, I cannot think that he is so absolutely just, in the delineation of the part, as Ben Jonson. Mr. Parsons has, of late years, played Shallow with that happy mirth and glee which is sure to captivate an audience : for who can be grave when Parsons either looks or speaks ?

Whether Jonson considered his being deprived of Shallow, for almost twenty years, as a manager's trick, or dishonest manœuvre of Colley Cibber, is not known ; but the old man never spoke of him with any complacency.

ACT IV. Scene, Archbishop of
York, &c.

The interview of the insurgents, and the
Earl of Westmoreland and Duke of Lan-
caster,

caster, with their armies in fight, was never represented with any warm tokens of approbation from the auditors, who always dismissed it with indifference; and, indeed, it appeared generally dull and uninteresting; but, whether this was owing to deficiency in the acting, or the frittering of the scene by the prompter, or any other cause, it is not easy to be decided. Perhaps we may with justice attribute the cold behaviour of the spectators to the scene itself, which, however skilfully written, is not calculated to excite the passions or to raise applause.

L A N C A S T E R.

Some guard these traitors to the block of death.

This masterpiece of infamous treachery and breach of compact, as related by our poet, is taken pretty exactly from Hollingshead and Stowe, though it is differently related by Hall, who makes the account much more honourable to the royalists. He says the apprehending the bishop and his confederates was an action of surprise. However, all later historians copy the two

first Chronicles, and, what is very surprising, this perfidious breach of faith passes without censure of any writer from Hollingshead to Hume. Our author is surely to blame for not marking this transaction with a proper stigma: he might have done it in very forcible terms from the mouth of the archbishop of York or Lord Mowbray, who strenuously opposed the proffered treaty,

The archbishop of York, says Hall, requested the executioner, when at the block, to cut off his head with five strokes, in remembrance of the five wounds of Christ. In consequence of this, it was reported, that, when the king sat at dinner, he received five strokes by an invisible hand, and was instantly seized with a leprosy; but this, says Hall, in great wrath, was a manifest lie. However, the superstitious people believed the archbishop was a saint, and many miracles, like those of Abbé Paris, were wrought at his grave, till Henry, by his authority, frightened away the people and the miracles at the same time,

Scroope

Scroope was the first bishop in England that suffered death for treason or any other crime ; Henry was the first of our kings who burned heretics and beheaded prelates.

Scene III.

F A L S T A F F.

A man cannot make him laugh : but that's no marvel ; he drinks no wine. Thin drinks do so over-cool the blood, and making many fish-meals, that they fall into a kind of male green-sickness ; and, when they marry, they get wenches.

What Shakspeare says ludicrously of thin potations, or water-drinking, is confirmed by no less authority than that of Hippocrates himself, in his Treatise on Diet, lib. I. sect. 20. It has likewise been proved, that, in the East-Indies, where they drink no wine, the number of the women exceeds that of the men considerably.

As to fish-diet, the common opinion is against Falstaff ; for it is by many supposed to be of a prolific nature. This was hinted by Arbuthnot in his Treatise on Diet, and suggested by Montesquieu in his Spirit of Laws. Haller and Dr. Reynold

Foster are of a different opinion. However, as far as silence on the subject may be allowed to speak for the jolly knight's opinion, the ancient historians are on his side: for neither Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, nor Arrian,* (all of whom have described several nations living on fish-diet,) have mentioned this quality belonging to it, or observed that such countries were more than commonly populous. There is another quality charged upon fish, which is still more remarkable. Whether the authority of Diodorus Siculus be so weighty as to gain any credit, I must leave to the reader: but he declares that constant eaters of fish are endued with a remarkable apathy, or insensibility, not only to the sentiments of the mind, but also to some of the natural appetites.

I D E M.

Skill in the weapon is nothing without sack. A good sherris sack hath a twofold operation in it: it ascends me into the brain, and dries me all the foolish and dull vapours.

With

* Falconer on solid food.

With Falstaff; wine is the promoter of courage and every good quality of the mind.

Athenæus, says Dr. Falconer, makes an observation similar to this. It is true; and I could quote many Greek verses to prove it: but the doctor knows there are so many precepts from various poets, and other writers, quoted by the same author, against the immoderate use of wine, that Falstaff's followers would lose more than they got by the authority of Athenæus. After this long note on fish and wine, I hope the reader will pardon a quotation from Aristotle's Problems; in which that philosopher gives an accurate description of the progress of wine, and the effects of its immoderate use.

' When a sober, moderate, and silent man drinks wine in a quantity more liberal than ordinary, it has the effect of cherishing and rousing his spirits and genius, and rendering him more communicative :
if

if taken still more freely, he becomes talkative, eloquent, and confident of his abilities : if taken in still larger quantities, it renders him bold and daring, and desirous to exert himself in action : if he persist in a more plentiful dose, it makes him petulant and contumelious. The next step renders him mad and outrageous, Should he proceed still farther, he becomes stupid and senseless.' Aristot. Probl. sect. 30.

Scene IV. King, Warwick, Clarence,
 Gloster.

K I N G.

Nothing but well to thee, Thomas of Clarence.

The king's recommending to the Duke of Clarence a particular observance of his brother the Prince of Wales, and assuring him of the prince's affection for him, is grounded upon a conversation between the king and prince, recorded by Stowe; in which the former puts the latter on his
guard

guard against the machinations of Clarence. The use which Shakspeare makes of this historical incident every reader will see and approve.

I D E M.

Towards fronting peril and oppos'd decay,

That is, to desperate adventures and assured destruction.

C L A R E N C E.

The river hath thrice flow'd ; no ebb between !

The short reign of this king was signalized by many sad disasters. Besides this extraordinary flow of the flood, which Mr. Stevens authenticates, a most destructive plague depopulated the whole kingdom. In London no less than thirty thousand were destroyed by it ; and the king, endeavouring to retire by water to Essex, very narrowly escaped being taken by some armed vessels from France.

The much-admired interview, between the King and the Prince of Wales, owes its beauty principally to situation and character,

rafter. The taking away the crown by the prince produces a most pathetic dialogue; such perhaps as no writer, except Shakspeare, could draw from so slender an incident. Where the heart speaks, no ornament of words is necessary: the more plain and simple the diction, the more affecting it will be. Such is the scene, though still more interesting, between Queen Katharine and Griffith, in the fourth act of Henry VIII. where that princess takes leave of the world, with a noble grandeur of mind, in expressions the most feeling, and at the same time the most familiar and unadorned.

The great expiation of sin, in the days of Henry, was esteemed to be a crusade to the Holy Land; and, though I once imagined he was not sincere in his intention of undertaking the expedition, yet I know not whether motives religious and political might not have co-operated to urge him to it. He certainly made great preparations for it, and it is as certain that
his

his son, Henry V. as a proof of his piety, on his death-bed declared, that if he had recovered from his illness, it was his firm resolution to rescue, if possible, the Holy Land from the infidels. This passion of delivering the Holy Sepulchre was so predominant for a long time, that the Countess of Richmond, mother of Henry VII. declared, if the Christian princes would undertake a crusade, she would herself turn laundress and wash their linen for them.

If it were possible that any thing could reconcile us to an usurper and the murderer of his sovereign, it must be the deep remorse and sincere compunction which the offender feels for crimes so atrocious. Had Henry been the next heir to the crown, his wickedness would not have been less; but the people would not have suffered from insurrections in favour of Roger Mortimer, the rightful successor by birth. This circumstance rendered his whole reign one continued scene of tumult,
battle,

battle, and bloodshed ; and involved his posterity and the kingdom in the longest and most sanguinary war that ever afflicted a nation. However he may have been cried up by the clergy for his piety in persecuting the followers of Wickliffe, and being the first king of England who burned heretics, it is well known that he and his father John of Gaunt, (who were the great patrons of Wickliffe,) when they understood that the clergy possessed almost half the revenues of the kingdom, declared that they would clip their wings ; or used words to that purpose. But the king stood in need of the clergy as much as they did of him. Henry's constant jealousy and fear of losing the crown may be forgiven ; for that was a just part of his punishment for seizing it : but his cruelty, in shedding torrents of blood to maintain the crown, can only be justified by the tyrant's law, necessity ; a necessity which he had imposed on himself.

Almost all the actors, who have for more than these last fifty years represented
this

this pathetic scene of the king and his son, have been fortunate in engaging the attention and raising the affections of their auditors. Booth, who played the king, and Wilkes, who acted the prince, were highly accomplished, and understood dignity and grace of action and deportment, with all the tender passions of the heart, in a superior degree. The elder Mills, in the king, and his son, an imitator of Wilks's manner, in the prince, followed almost immediately these consummate actors; and though they were by no means equal to them, were above mediocrity, especially the father in Henry, which happened to be the last part this worthy man appeared in. He was taken ill a few days after he had acted it, and died, I believe, in November, 1736. His name was announced in the bills for Macbeth, but Quin was obliged to supply his place. I saw him hurrying to the playhouse between five and six in the evening. Milward, the successor of Mills in Henry, was, in pathos,

thos, greatly his superior. His countenance was finely expressive of grief, and the plaintive tones of his voice were admirably adapted to the languor of a dying person, and to the speech of an offended yet affectionate parent. Garrick's figure did not assist him in the personating of this character, but the forcible expression of his countenance and his energy of utterance made ample amends for defect of person. To describe the anguish, mixed with terror, which he seemed to feel when he cast up his eyes to heaven, and pronounced these words,

How I came by the crown, O God, forgive me!
would call for the pencil of a Raphael or a Reynolds.

Though Garrick, from a mean jealousy, a passion which constantly preyed on his mind, denied to Powel the merit of understanding the pathos of this celebrated scene, the audience thought far otherwise, and, by their tears and applause, justified the action of that very pleasing tragedian.

In

In the last lingering stage of life, when worn by complicated distemper, and tormented with afflicting pains of the gout, the sick and emaciated Barry undertook to represent the dying scenes of Henry. In person, if we consult history, he was better adapted to the part than any of his predecessors; for almost all the princes of the Plantagenet line were remarkable for procerity: but that was but a trifling requisite in this great actor. The fatherly reproofs and earnest admonitions, from the consequence imparted by Barry's pleasing manner, as well as noble figure, acquired authority and importance. His feelings were, perhaps, heightened by the anxiety of his mind in the declining state of his health, and the frequent pains of his cruel distemper. From his setting sun, which emitted a warm though glimmering ray, spectators might form a judgment what Barry had been in his meridian glory.

CHAPTER XVI.

Retrospect on Lowin, and several other comedians, who lived during the civil war.

BEFORE I take my leave of Henry IV. I cannot forbear reflecting, with some concern, upon the fate of honest Jack Falstaff; I mean John Lowin, the original actor of this inimitable character; and his constant friend and fellow-labourer, Joseph Taylor, the first actor of Hamlet.

When the civil wars shut the doors of the theatres, many of the comedians, who had youth, spirit, and vigour of body, took up arms in the defence of their royal master. When they could no longer serve him by the profession of acting, they boldly vindicated his cause in the field. Those, who were too far advanced in age to give martial proofs of their attachment to royalty, were reduced to the alternative of starving or engaging in some employment
to

to support their wants. Lowin and Taylor were, in the fatal æra of our civil dissensions, got beyond their grand climacteric: for Taylor had acted Hamlet almost forty-five years before that time, and Lowin had, for at least forty-two years, delighted the public in Falstaff.

The fanatical zeal of the Nonconformists could bear no exhibitions or shows but their own: all stage-plays these religionists looked upon as profane; and devoted the actors, whom they denominated the children of Satan, to perdition. That tedious writer, William Prynne, in his *Histriomastix*, had, with as much folly as brutality, involved the king and queen in the guilt of encouraging, by their presence, the Satanical diversions of the theatre. To read and amuse himself with the writings of Shakspeare, the great Milton most shamefully charged upon Charles as a crime: though Milton himself was a professed admirer of our great bard. Such is the malignant spirit of party! and so little able

are the noblest minds to resist its influence!

During the first years of the unnatural contest between the king and parliament, the players were not unwelcome guests to those towns and cities which espoused the royal cause: but, in London, where bigotry and opposition to the king were triumphant, they experienced nothing but persecution. A few of the nobility, indeed, who loved the amusements of the stage, encouraged the players to act in their houses privately: but the watchful eye of furious zealots prevented all public exhibitions; except, as the author of *Historia Histrionica* asserts, now and then such as were given with great caution and privacy. Some time before the beheading of the unhappy Charles, a company of comedians was formed out of the wreck of several, who played at the Cockpit three or four times: but, while they were acting Fletcher's *Bloody Brother*, the soldiers, rushing in, put an end to the play, and carried the

the actors to Hatton-house, at that time a sort of prison for royal delinquents; where they were confined two or three days, and, after being stripped of their stage-apparel, were discharged. In this tragedy, Lowin acted Aubrey, and Taylor Rollo.

The governing powers, however they might exert themselves to suppress stage-plays by violence, did not, by any formal act of state, prohibit their representation till October, 1647, and the February following; when the Long Parliament issued two ordinances, by which all stage-plays and interludes were absolutely forbidden, under very severe penalties.

Much about this time, as far as I can collect from the little that has been handed down to us of these eminent men, Lowin kept the Three Pigeons at Brentford, where he was attended by Joseph Taylor; but, whether as friend, assistant, or partner, cannot be determined. Here they lingered out an uncomfortable existence, with scarce any other means of

support than those which they obtained from the friends of royalty and the old lovers of the drama, who now and then paid them a visit, and left them marks of their bounty. Upon these occasions Lowin and Taylor gave their visitors a taste of their quality. The first roused up the spirit and humour of Falstaff. Again the fat old rogue swore that he knew the prince and Poins as well as he that made them. Hamlet, too, raised the visionary terrors of the Ghost, and filled his select auditors with terror and amazement! To entertain their guests, we must suppose they assumed various personages, and alternately excited merriment and grief. How often were these honest fellows surprised into a belief of the good news that the king and parliament had come to a treaty! that peace would be restored, and the king return to his capital in triumph! How would their countenances then be lighted up with joy, the glass cheerfully circulate,

and

and the meeting be dismissed with *The king shall enjoy his own again !*

Their honest friend and affociate, Goff, the actor of womens parts at Black-friers and the Globe, was the usual jackall to summon the scattered comedians together, that they might exhibit at Holland-house, or some nobleman's seat, within a few miles of the capital.* The want of fine clothes, and the proper ornaments of a theatre, was excused by their noble employers ; for the perseverance of their furious persecutors, and the violence and rapacity of the soldiers, had rendered it hazardous to wear any costly garments. Painted cloth served as a good substitute to rich habits and royal trains.

In these distracted times what became of those comedians who had represented queens, princesses, and other females, in Shakspere's, Ben Jonson's, Beaumont and Fletcher's, and Massinger's, plays, at this

Y 4

distance

* Historia Histrionica.

distance of time cannot be learned; for no historical trace of them is to be found. The two most celebrated of these performers, were John Thomson and John Hunnieman. The last was the author of a play, with the name of which I should be glad to enrich the dramatic catalogue, but I cannot learn whether it was a tragedy, a comedy, or a mixture of both. From a copy of verses, to the author, by Sir Aston Cockaine, we are informed that this dramatic piece was much approved by the public; as Sir Aston's epistle contains the only information of Hunnieman's authorship, I shall transcribe it as a theatrical curiosity:

To Mr. John Hunnieman.

On, hopeful youth, and let thy happy strain
 Redeem the glory of the stage again;
 Lessen the loss of Shakspeare's death, by thy
 Successful pen and fortunate phantasy,
 He did not only write but act, and so
 Thou dost not only act, but writest too.
 Between you there no difference appears,
 But what may be made up with equal years.

This

This is my suffrage, and I scorn my pen
Should crown the heads of undeserving men.

Great must have been the loss of this play to the public, if Hunnieman was a rival of Shakspeare, as is suggested by Sir Aston.

Of all the players, mentioned in any narrative relative to the English stage, Eylæard Swanston, the successor of Burbage in the character of Othello, was the only one who professed himself a Presbyterian, and an avowed friend of the parliament, in opposition to the royal cause. I will not go so far as Charles II. who told a nobleman that Presbyterianism *was a religion not fit for a gentleman*; but I much doubt whether Swanston's zeal did not abridge his charity. — A convert is often a narrow-minded bigot, and poor Lowin, Taylor, and the rest of his old friends, could not expect, from one of Calamy's congregation, any kind retrospect of friendship.*

But

* The author of *Historia Histrionica* says, Swanston took up the trade of a jeweller. I should imagine that he had been originally bred one, and left jewelling for the stage.

But the only man, who triumphed over the wild fanaticism and cruel hypocrisy of the times, was that excellent comedian Robert Cox, whose name I do not see in any of the old lists of actors.

When all the theatres were silenced, Cox employed himself in composing small interludes, called *drolls*, like such as were formerly acted at Bartholomew and Southwark fairs. The most serious of these pieces, such as *Acteon* and *Diana*, and *Oenone*, had a dash of the comic in them, though, for the most part, they were farces of one act, with singing and dancing; as *Hobbinol*, *Singing Simpson*, and *Simpleton the Smith*.* By the connivance of the state Cerberus's, to whom this adroit fellow sily gave an opiate or sop of *aurum palpabile*, he contrived to get his pieces acted to full houses at the Red Bull Theatre, under the colour of rope-dancing. Cox acted the principal parts himself, and with such life, spirit, and nature, that he restored

* Langbaine.

restored to the people the long-forgotten custom of widening their jaws into risibility; for, to laugh, in those days of hypocrisy, was a mortal sin. When he played young Simpleton the Smith at a country fair, he so delighted the noted master of a forge, in those parts, that he very gravely offered to take him for his journeyman, and to allow him twelvepence per week more than the rest. "I would accept your proffer with all my heart, (said Cox,) *but you I see have a good shop of my own.*"

This comedian travelled all over the kingdom with his company, which consisted, I think, of himself, a man, and a boy. The universities themselves opened their arms to entertain this master of merriment. When he went to Stourbridge Fair, Cox did not forget to renew his acquaintance with the heads of houses. At Oxford he so far got into the good graces of a poetical butler, that he was pleased to oblige him with a prologue, that he might appear in form, as he had formerly seen
the

the members of a college, when they acted a play at Christmas.*

By pursuing this method of itinerant exhibition, and by never staying long at a place, this comedian acquired considerable sums of money, and I have not the least doubt that he shared a good part of his profits with his old superannuated friends at Brentford. The players are, of all people, the most alive to the feelings of humanity, and the readiest to relieve one another's wants. Let us consider Cox as the good Samaritan, who poured balm into the wounds of poor Lowin and Taylor, and sometimes cheered their hearts in the midst of their distresses. These, indeed, were greatly increased after the beheading of the king and the extirpation of monarchy. The players, however, transferred their allegiance to the son of their unhappy sovereign, and, amongst their friends and well-wishers, drank a health, we may reasonably believe, *to their king over the water*. A toast that might be
given

* Langbaine.

given *at that time* with propriety as well as loyalty.

In 1647, Shirley published the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, I believe, with a view chiefly to relieve the wants of the surviving actors, who had distinguished themselves in the principal characters of these writers. The names of Joseph Taylor, John Lowin, Theophilus Bird, Robert Benfield, Stephen Hammerton,* Thomas Pollard,† and Richard Robinson, are subscribed to a dedication presented to the Earl of Pembroke, the patron of dramatic poetry.

In 1652, Taylor and Lowin, being arrived to a very great age, and in very indigent circumstances, published Fletcher's comedy of the *Wild-Goose Chase* for their mutual advantage: it was ushered into the world

* This player was first a famous representer of women's characters, and, afterwards, as much celebrated for a graceful actor of men's parts.

† Pollard was more fortunate than the rest of his associates, having a fortune of his own, he retired into the country, and lived with his relations.

world with an advertisement, in which they modestly intimated their wants, and called upon the benevolence of all who had a taste for the drama.

I should not forget that Joseph Taylor was the friend of Philip Massinger; that he inscribed to him a copy of verses on the success of his Roman Actor, in which tragedy Taylor performed the principal part.

My very learned and kind friend, the Reverend Mr. Bowle, of Idmiston, has informed me that he has read a copy of verses of Shakerly Marmion, author of the Antiquary and several other dramatic pieces, to Joseph Taylor, upon his presentment of *The Faithful Shepherdess*, in which he styles him his worthy friend.

The exact time, when Taylor and Lowin died, cannot be traced; but, it is certain, they paid the debt to nature some few years before the Restoration. Lowin died at Brentford, and Taylor at Richmond.

CHAPTER XVII.

King Henry VIII.

Reasons why this play was written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.—King James's dislike to the family of Tudor accounted for.—His love of poetry and regard for Shakspeare.—The author's difficulty in drawing a portrait of Henry VIII.—Merit of the play.—The prologue and its author.—Interview of two kings in the vale of Arde.—Buckingham and Wolfsey.—Passages explained.—Generosity of the French king.—Somerset's contempt of the French.—Word royal explained.—And the word fierce.—Character of the Emperor Charles V.—Wolfsey's immense revenues.—Gibber's Wolfsey.—Mossop and Digges.—The author's admirable portraiture of English princes.—Betterton's excellent acting of Henry VIII.—The Wolfsey of Harris.—His various merit in comedy and tragedy.—Booth's Henry VIII.—Quin, Harper, Price, and Nokes.

MR.

MR. Malone has laboured strenuously, and, I think, successfully, to prove that the historical play of Henry VIII. must have been acted during the life-time of Queen Elizabeth. Several passages of the play may be produced, which, from their internal evidence, would farther convince us that the author could not have projected such a piece in the reign of James I.

But there is yet a stronger reason for insisting upon this argument than what has been hitherto produced: our author could not be unacquainted with the extreme aversion which James had entertained, long before he mounted the throne of England, to his predecessor; an aversion that could not be extinguished by her decease.

Upon his accession to the crown, nobody durst appear before him in a mourning habit for that princess. Sully, the French ambassador, who had been particularly enjoined by his master Henry IV. to pay that decent respect which was due to the
memory

memory of his friend and ally, was obliged to throw aside the mourning dresses he had purchased for himself and retinue, upon being informed that, if he persisted in his design, he would not easily gain an audience of the king. James's aversion to the family of his predecessor was universally known; and, though he pretended to be angry with Sir Walter Raleigh for the severe character of Henry VIII. which he had given in the preface to his History of the World, yet it was well known that his own opinion coincided with that of the historian.

The king's dislike to the Tudor family was not founded on mere caprice. Henry VIII. in his last will, had, as far as was in his power, by not mentioning them, excluded, from the throne of England, the whole Scottish race; for he preferred the descendants from his younger sister, of the house of Brandon, to the offspring of Margaret, the elder sister, who was married to James IV. of Scotland. Queen Elizabeth,

besides the putting his mother, under the form of law, to an ignominious death, had treated James himself with insufferably assumed haughtiness and superiority. She deferred the nomination of his succession to the throne of England to the last moments of her life.

The king, who was a lover of the muses, and had sacrificed to them himself in his early days, conferred marks of royal favour upon Shakspeare, almost as soon as he took possession of his new dominions; and the poet was too good a courtier to write a play upon a subject which was to include a laboured panegyric on the king's hated predecessor and her family.

It was no easy task for an author to compose a dramatic piece which should comprehend several transactions of a monarch recently dead, who had rendered himself so odious to his subjects. To bring upon the stage, before the reigning queen, his daughter, a character so doubtful, at least, as her royal father; to present a strong resemblance

blance of many of his most striking features, without alarming his sovereign, or disgusting the spectators; was an undertaking worthy the genius of Shakspeare; and in which, notwithstanding the apparent difficulty, he has admirably succeeded.

Although this play, on a superficial view, contains nothing but a tissue of pomp and ceremony, made out of masques and trials, a coronation and a christening, it abounds in striking events, which embrace the fates of important characters,—with passions which excite our terror and commiseration, and with profound morality, which tends to moderate, to humble, and to rectify, the mind.

The prologue, like most compositions of that sort in our author's days, is little more than good sense put into measured prose. Our last editors, and their assistants, suspect, with reason, that it was not entirely the work of Shakspeare. Ben Jonson, it is supposed, wrote the greatest part of it, if not the whole. Every body

will perceive that the beginning bears no resemblance to that reserve and modesty with which our poet ever addressed an audience.

I come no more to make you laugh: things now,
That bear a weighty and a serious brow,
Sad, high, and working, full of state and show,
Such *noble* scenes as draw the eye to flow,
We now present.——

Great part of the prologue is composed of severe satire on plays which abound with the noise of targets, of drums and trumpets, and the exhibition of fools, whose coats are *guarded with yellow*; and, as our author comes properly within this censure, Jonson, in all probability, maliciously stole an opportunity to throw in his envious and spiteful invective before the representation of his rival's play.

In all probability Henry VIII. was revived soon after the coronation of James and his Queen, Anne of Denmark. Jonson, by his connection with the court, might occasionally be useful towards conducting the pageantry of the scenes. Whether Jonson's
Sejanus

Sejanus was acted before Henry VIII. was revived, is not now to be known; but, much about that time, a peace seems to have been patched up between Jonson and the players, and, most likely, by the mediation of our gentle bard; for Shakspeare not only acted a character in Sejanus, but wrote part of the tragedy as it was originally performed.

Act I. Scene I.

Dukes of Norfolk and Buckingham.

B U C K I N G H A M.

Those sons of glory, those two lights of men,
Met in the vale of Arde!

Since this interview of Henry of England and Francis king of France, in the vale of Arde, nothing has taken place between any European monarchs that can be compared to it in magnificent show and performance of military exercise: the nobility of both countries were so ostentatiously prodigal, and so emulous in splendour and dress, that the place where the two kings met was called *the field of the cloth*

of gold. In consequence of this rivalry in grandeur, they involved themselves in such expence, that the penury of their whole lives afterwards could not repair the profusion of a few days.

I D E M.

———All the time
I was in my chamber a prisoner.

The poet has not put in the mouth of Buckingham the true reason of his absence from this interview at Arde. — The duke was very rich and loved œconomy,—a quality by no means pleasing to an arbitrary court, by which independence is ever viewed with suspicious eyes. He, finding the preparations for this solemnity amount to immense sums, threw out expressions of displeasure against Cardinal Wolsey, whom he accused as the contriver of the parade. Lord Herbert, Hollinghead, and Polydore Virgil, agree in this circumstance, and thence we may date Wolsey's animosity to the duke.

NORFOLK.

N O R F O L K.

Pomp, till this time, was single, but now marry'd
To one above itself.

That is, pomp was now overmatch-
ed. The meeting of two such mighty
monarchs, and their queens, with a re-
tinue of men and women, the most illuf-
trious for birth, rank, courage, beauty,
and every accomplishment, lessened and
disgraced all poms and ceremonies prece-
ding.

The poet, in the pursuit of a noble
thought, sometimes overstrains himself,
and misses the mark he aims at. The
whole description of this celebrated meeting
is rich in matter, though harsh in expres-
sion. It is laboured with art, but often
rugged, and sometimes bordering on ob-
scurity,

I D E M.

——— Their very labour
Was to them a painting.

That is, it brought colour into their
cheeks,

I D E M.

——— Still him in eye,
Still him in praise.

Z 4

Henry

cried out aloud, "Let them pass! it is plain they have not the spirit to trust us, though we have the courage to trust ourselves with them."

N O R F O L K.

—— — All was *royal*

To the disposing of it.

By the word *royal*, in Shakspeare, we are to understand something supremely excellent; as in Macbeth, Act II.

——— Our fears, in Banquo,

Stick deep, and in his *royalty* of nature

Reigns that which would be fear'd.

The word βασιλευβρον, in Homer, has the same import; and is so applied by Theoclemenes the fugitive, in his exclamation to Telemachus, on observing an omen, which he interprets in his favour:

Τμήρεα δ' οὐκ ἐστὶ γένευσ βασιλευβρον ἄλλο

Εν δήμῳ Ἰθακῆς.

ODYSS. LIB. XVII.

In Wolfey's speech to Sir William Kingston, just before he expired, it is to be observed that the word *royal* stands for confirmed obstinacy of temper.

“ He

“ He was a prince, said the dying cardinal, of a most *royal* carriage, and hath a princely heart; and, rather than he will mis for any part of his will, he will endanger half his kingdom.”

B U C K I N G H A M.

——— What had he to do

In these fierce vanities? ———

Mr. Steevens is of opinion that *fierce* is used here as the French word *fier*. Dr. Johnson goes farther, and supposes it might possibly mean the mimical ferocity of the combatants; and this is nearer the author's intention, I believe: for these mock fights often produced very terrible consequences; many combatants, in the vale of Arde, were unhorsed; Henry II. son of Francis, was killed, by the splinter of a spear, in a tournament. So many lives were occasionally lost at these trials of personal prowess, that, utterly to discourage and put an end to them, the popes issued canons and decrees against them, as practices unlawful and unchristian; and, when nothing else could prevail, finally to extirpate them, they

they denied christian burial to those who died in such encounters.

In Timon of Athens, *fierce* means, I think, *excessive*, *extreme*, or *terrible*. The steward, speaking of Timon's fall from the highest prosperity to the lowest state of poverty, says,

O the *fierce* wretchedness which glory brings !

B U C K I N G H A M.

———Why the devil,

Upon the French going out——

That is, upon the French consenting to settle the terms of accommodation, to meet the English in the vale of Arde, by an interview with the two kings.

N O R F O L K.

France hath flaw'd the league.

To have a just knowledge of Henry's and his minister's characters, it is necessary to throw in some light from history :

Though the Duke of Norfolk charges the French with breaking the solemn compact entered into between the two kings, at their interview, from which they parted
with

with the most solemn protestations of friendship, the dissolving of the treaty cannot be ascribed to Francis. Charles V. Emperor of Germany, the most subtle, interested, and disingenuous, prince of his time, was alarmed at the late interview, and consequent confederacy, of two such potent monarchs. When Henry, before he returned to his dominions, paid a visit to him at Gravelines, the politic Charles, who saw through the capricious temper of his visitor, soon found means to efface that friendship to which the sincere and noble temper of the French king had given birth. But, that which was more essential to his interest, he gained over Wolsey to his side, by promising to assist him in acquiring the papacy, and by putting him in possession of the revenues of two bishoprics in Castile. The exorbitant incomes which the cardinal enjoyed were not greatly inferior to the revenues of the king himself. The Duke of Buckingham hints at the cardinal's

nal's pension from the emperor in a following part of the scene :.

——— I'm sure the emperor
Paid 'ere he promis'd.

Enter the cardinal with the purse borne
before him.

The cardinal, in his passage, fixeth his eye on Buckingham, and Buckingham on him, both full of disdain.

The instruction which Shakspeare, in this quotation, has given the actors, is not so generally observed as it ought. The aspect of Wolsey, to Buckingham, should at once be steady and deliberate, scornful and reproaching. Buckingham's look, in return, should be fierce, indignant, and impatient. The cardinal, in passing by the duke, should still keep his eye fixed upon him, as if demanding some salutation or mark of respect ; but, on the duke's persisting silence, he turns to his secretaries, and enquires of them concerning the examination of the duke's surveyor, in a tone not quite loud enough to be heard by the duke.

Colley

Colley Cibber has been much praised for his assuming port, pride, and dignity, in Wolsey; but his manner was not correspondent to the grandeur of the character. The man who was familiar in the greatest courts of Europe, and took the lead in the councils and designs of mighty monarchs, must have acquired an easy dignity in action and deportment, and such as Colley Cibber never understood or practised. If speaking with feeling and energy were all the requisites in the cardinal, Mossop would have excelled greatly; but, in spite of the robe, which was of some advantage to him, his action, step, and whole conduct of his person, were extremely awkward, and unsuitable to the accomplished statesman, the companion of princes. Mr. Digges, if he had not sometimes been extravagant in gesture and quaint in elocution, would have been nearer the resemblance of the great minister than any actor I have seen represent it.

Scene

Scene II. Council Chamber.

Enter King Henry leaning upon Wolsey.

Shakspeare is eminent in the drawing of his most distinguished historical characters : here, more particularly, genius guides his pencil. If we compare his several portraits of our English kings with their actions, as recorded in history, we shall perceive a striking and faithful resemblance. They are as powerfully discriminated by their peculiar passions, virtues, follies, and faculties, as the heroes of the greatest poet of the ancients. The gloomy turbulence of John ; the rashness and effeminacy of Richard II. the jealous anxiety for the crown in Henry IV. the generous and warlike spirit of Henry V. the piety and imbecillity of Henry VI. the subtlety, perfidy, cruelty, and courage, of Richard III. and, lastly, the strutting grandeur, imperious spirit, and undisguised, though boisterous, temper of Henry VIII. --these characters are so justly and skilfully separated from each other, by the author, that

no name is wanted to distinguish them from each other.

Betterton, was taught the part of Harry VIII. by Sir William Davenant, from his remembrance of the performance of the admired and accomplished Lowin. Old Downs gives it as his opinion, that nobody can ever approach to the great excellence which Betterton displayed in acting the king. 'Wolfey (says the same stage-historian) was supported with great pride, port, and mien, by *Harris*, an actor, of whom we scarce know any thing, except that he played a variety of characters in tragedy and comedy, and suppose, from that circumstance, he must have enjoyed very comprehensive abilities for the stage.' I find his name, in Downs, to Romeo, and to Sir Andrew Aguecheek in Twelfth Night, which are parts as distant, in dramatic features, as Hamlet and the Grave-digger. Harris was the actor of these and many other parts of equal dissimilarity. Cibber, I suppose, had not seen him, for his name

is not in his apology. I imagine he left the stage much about the time the companies of Drury-lane and Dorset-gardens were, by the king's command, united. Harris's name is not to be found in the dramatis personæ of any play since that period. He had formerly been joint-director of the duke's company with Lady Davenant and Betterton, and might possibly be offended that, in the treaty between Betterton, in conjunction with Davenant's successors, and Hart and Kynaston, of the king's theatre, he was left out.*

His merit, in several characters besides Wolsey, is noticed by Downs; particularly in Sir Positive Atall in the Impertinents of Shadwell, taken from Moliere's *Les Facheux*, and the part of the master, in *The Man's the Master*, by Davenant. His talents were not confined to acting alone; singing was another of his qualifications: he and Sandford sang a humorous ballad-epilogue in the character of

two

* By looking carefully over the *Roscius Anglicanus*, I find that Harris was originally of the king's company, but soon left it to join Betterton.

two street ballad-fingers ; the same, I believe, which, many years afterwards, was sung by that droll, honest, agreeable, fellow, Jemmy Bencroft, and Nat Clarke.— I call him Jemmy, because it will better revive his memory, among his surviving friends, than by the addition which he afterwards merited of James Bencroft, Esq, patentee of Covent-Garden theatre.

In the play of *The Man's the Master*, Harris had the misfortune to wound Cademan in the eye, by using a sharp instead of a foil, which disabled him from acting ever after. Cademan received a pension from the players, on that account, we may reasonably suppose, as long as he lived, for he enjoyed it in 1708, thirty-five years after the accident.

Booth succeeded Betterton in Henry VIII. To support the dignity of the prince, and yet retain that vein of humour which pervades this character, requires great caution in the actor. Without particular attention, Harry will be manufactured into a royal bully or

ridiculous buffoon. Booth was particularly happy in preserving the true spirit of the part through the whole play. Mr. Macklin, who had the good fortune to see him several times in Harry, has declared that he shone in the character with particular lustre. Quin, who had the good sense to admire and imitate Booth, and the honesty to own it, kept as near as possible to his great exemplar's portrait; but Quin was deficient in flexibility as well as strength of voice; he could not utter impetuous and vehement anger with vigour, nor dart tremendous looks; all which were suited to the happier organs and countenance of Booth. He was, besides, a stranger to grace in action or deportment. — Booth walked with the ease of a gentleman and the dignity of a monarch. The grandeur and magnificence of Henry were, in Booth, sustained to the height.

How the managers took it into their heads to give this part to Harper, during Booth's last illness, I cannot conceive, unless his
being

being a fat man was the great recommendation. I could never separate honest Jobson, the cobbler, from the prince: he put me in mind of the old ballad of King Harry and the cobbler. I should not forget that, when Betterton and Harris acted the king and the cardinal, the little character of Lord Sands was played by Price, frequently mentioned by Downs, as a most admirable low comedian.— Why Nokes personated so serious a part as the duke of Norfolk, I cannot conceive: perhaps it was not the great comic actor, but that Nokes who was famous for playing womens characters.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Shakspeare's historical plays. — Warnings to prince and people. — Court oppression and ministerial juggling. — Queen Katharine an advocate for the people. — A horrible tax. — Loans and benevolences. — Duke of Suffolk and Green. — Poverty and necessity. — The cunning of ministers. — Tractable obedience explained. — Sick interpreters. — George I. and his courtiers. — The duke of Buckingham's eloquence. — His title to the crown. — Mrs. Porter. — Mrs. Pritchard. — French Fashions adopted by the English. — Masquerade; game of mumchance. — Banquet with two hundred covers. — Buckingham's condemnation. — Duke of Norfolk's tears. — Earl of Kildare. — Wolsey's malice. — Buckingham deprived of his right. — Reason of the king's jealousy and the people's love. — Wilks in Buckingham. — Archbishopric of Toledo. — Suffolk's character.

THE

THE plays of Shakspeare, which are founded on English history, are, in my opinion, amongst our most valuable dramatic compositions. They contain excellent advice and perpetual warnings to the kings and people of this country. In these inestimable records they will find a reflecting mirror of their ancestors, probably of themselves.—Exact pictures of the present and future times I cannot mean; but such general resemblances of character, in prince and subject, as must necessarily arise in a mixed government, like ours; where incroachments, on one side, must perpetually meet with resistance on the other, and will infallibly produce events not very unlike those which are described so affectingly by our inimitable poet.

The scene before us presents a true picture of court oppression and ministerial juggling. The author has related the matter in question with some tenderness to the memory of Henry, and this affords ano-

ther reason why we should suppose the play was written before the accession of James I. Queen Katharine is judiciously chosen to represent, to the throne, the grievances of the people, who were burdened by a most illegal and oppressive impost. Shakspeare here assumes the part of the honest politician and good citizen. In the conduct of the scene, he gives a caution to all succeeding princes against the undue and illegal exercise of their power.

Henry, by his mere arbitrary will, and without assembling a parliament, had issued out commissions, by which he commanded to be levied four shillings in the pound from the clergy, and three shillings and four pence from the laity. But this unprecedented and horrible taxation so disgusted the people, in all parts of the kingdom, that the king was obliged to revoke the powers he had given, and had recourse to another unjust practice of raising money on loans or benevolence: the name was softer, but the exaction equally

qually oppressive and unlawful. When the act which had passed in the reign of Richard III. by which all such methods of raising money were abolished, was opposed to this mode of taxation, to the disgrace of the king and his ministers, it was answered, ' That Richard being an usurper, his parliament was an unlawful assembly, and their acts of no validity,' which was plainly to declare that an arbitrary tyrant was more careful to distribute justice and equity to his subjects than a lawful prince.

N O R F O L K.

The clothiers all, not able to maintain
The many to them 'longing, have put off
The spinsters, carders, fullers, weavers, who,
Unfit for other life, and compell'd by hunger,
And lack of other means, are all in uproar.

The duke of Suffolk, who was much beloved, prevailed on many of the wealthiest clothiers to submit to the royal imposition; but, on this compliance, they discharged all their workmen and manufacturers under the pretence that they could not now maintain them. This occasioned

a great insurrection in the county of Suffolk. The duke ventured his person among them, and asked who was their leader. One Green stepped forward and answered, "They had two : *Poverty and Necessity*." The king, notwithstanding his arbitrary and boisterous disposition, was obliged to pardon all who had opposed his illegal impositions. This, I believe, was the only instance of Henry's retracting his once-settled purpose,

W O L S E Y.

——— Please you, Sir,
I know but of a single part in aught
Pertains to the state.

I am but one, of many counsellors, who, of equal power with myself, advised this unhappy business. This is too often the language of a minister, who, though universally known to govern his master, and take the lead in all transactions, yet, when questioned about any state matter, declares he acts only in his proper department.

Q U E E N.

——— This makes bold mouths,
Tongues spit their duties out, and cold hearts freeze
Allegiance;

Allegiance ; their curses now
 Live where their prayers did ; and it comes to pass
 That tractable obedience is a slave
 To each incensed will.—

The latter part of this speech is thus ingeniously explained by Musgrave ; “ Those who are tractable and obedient must give way to others who are angry.”

But the queen has described the consequences which oppression and injustice are apt to produce, and therefore intimates that the very persons, who, before this imposition, were obedient and tractable subjects, are now changed into resolute opposers of government, from motives of just resentment.

W O L S E Y.

I have no farther gone in this, than by
 A single voice, and that not past me, but
 By learned approbation of the judges.

Shakspeare has, in this, followed exactly the thread of history. The judges, says Hume, went so far as positively to affirm, “ The king might exact any sum of money he pleased.” We need not be surprised

prised that his majesty's privy council gave an assent to this decree, which annihilated, at once, all the privileges of the subject. It fortunately happened, in this instance, though the parliament in general conspired with the king, through his whole reign, to fix shackles on the people, tyranny was obliged to forego its hold.

W O L S E Y.

——What we oft do best

By sick interpreters, once weak ones,

Is not ours, or not allow'd.

By sick interpreters, we are to understand peevish or ill-natured expositors, men, who, from an overheated temper, or melancholy disposition, put a wrong construction upon public measures.

I D E M.

A word with you. [*Speaking to the secretary*]

Let there be letters writ, to every shire,

Of the king's grace and pardon.

————— Let it be nois'd

That, through our intercession, this revokement

And pardon comes.

The minister's filching from his royal master the honour of bestowing grace
and

and pardon on the subject, appeared so gross and impudent a prevarication, that, when this play was acted before George I. at Hampton-Court, about the year 1717, the courtiers laughed so loudly at this ministerial craft, that his majesty, who was unacquainted with the English language, asked the lord-chamberlain the meaning of their mirth; upon being informed of it, the king joined in a laugh of approbation.

K I N G.

————— And when we,
Almost with listening ravish'd —————

The duke of Buckingham's eloquence has been recorded by the old historians, who pretend to say he inherited the gift from his father, once the bosom counsellor of Richard III. who made use of his art in speaking to cajole the citizens of London, and to persuade them that his title to the crown was better founded than that of his nephew.

S U R V E Y O R.

————— If the king
Should die without issue, he'd carry it so
To make the sceptre his.

It

It was this nobleman's misfortune to have a remote title to the succession of the crown. He was descended, by a female, from the duke of Gloster, youngest son of Edward III.

In the scene before us, the deportment of the actors, when the play was revived in 1727, was much approved. Booth did not command attention more by attraction of figure and just elocution, than by the propriety of his action and the stateliness of his step. The business of Wolsey, in this scene, being confined to address, caution, and management, was not unsuitably represented by Colley Cibber. But the dignity and grace of a queen were never, perhaps, more happily set off than by Mrs. Porter. There was an elevated consequence in the manner of that actress, which, since her time, I have in vain sought for in her successors.

Her first speech to the king, after kneeling to him, was uttered with such intelligence and sensibility, that she commanded the applause as well as attention, of the audience.

dience. The words are simple, and, seemingly, unimportant; but she understood her author well, and, in delivering them, conveyed the prime duties of the kingly office with energy.

*That you would love yourself, and, in that love,
Not unconsidered leave your honour, nor
The dignity of your office, is the point
Of my petition.*

Her conduct, in the whole scene, was a mixture of graceful elocution and dignified behaviour.

Mrs. Pritchard, in Queen Katharine, was easy in her address and natural in her expression, but unaccompanied by that grace and dignity which her predecessor, Mrs. Porter, knew so well to assume.

Scene III.

L O R D C H A M B E R L A I N .

———All the good our English
Have got by our last voyage is but merely
A fit or two o'th' face.

Our neighbours of France have, time
out of mind, constantly led the way in new
fashions

fashions and fopperies; and we have as constantly imitated and reproached them for it. Grimace of countenance is here satirized. Dryden, in the epilogue to his *Astrologer*, charges a mimic of French absurdities with a different kind of affectation :

Up starts a monsieur, new come o'er, and warm
In the French sloop and pull-back of the arm.

Scene IV.

S E R V A N T.

—————A noble troop of strangers,
For so they seem; they've left their barge and landed,
And hitherto make as great ambassadors
From foreign princes.

This visit of the King and Courtiers, masqued, to the Cardinal, is taken from Hollingshead; our poet has artfully introduced Anne Bullen to attract the notice of the King for the first time, an incident, which is not in the original. The maskers, says the Chronicle, were dressed most gorgeously, and brought with them a
large

large gold cup filled with crowns and other pieces of gold, which were to be played for at a game called *mum-chance*, I suppose from the silence observed during play, and the chance of the die. The maskers poured out of the cup, before the Cardinal, their winnings and losings, which amounted to about two hundred crowns. — ‘At all,’ said the Cardinal; and, throwing the die, he won the whole.*

C A R D I N A L.

There should be one amongst them, by his person,
More worthy this place than myself.

This incident is likewise taken from Hollingshead, though Shakspeare has properly enough graced Wolsey with the good fortune to select his royal master from the rest. He really mistook Sir Edward Nevil, who was disguised with a black beard, for the king, who laughed at the blunder, and immediately pulled off his mask.

VOL. I.

B b

W O L S E Y.

* Hollingshead, Vol. II.

W O L S E Y.

Sir Thomas Lovel, is the banquet ready
In the privy-chamber?

At this after-banquet, where the king
himself presided, no less than two hundred
covered dishes were placed on the table.

Act. II. Scene the first.

The account of the D. of Buckingham's trial is faithfully and pathetically described from our old Chronicles. The Duke of Norfolk, who was lord-high-steward at this memorable trial, on passing sentence upon the noble prisoner, could not refrain from shedding tears; perhaps reflecting that Buckingham's misfortune might one day be his own.

G E N T L E M A N.

————— Certainly,
The Cardinal is the end of this.

That is, Wolsey was the chief promoter of Buckingham's fall.

S E C O N D

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

'Tis likely,

By all conjectures: first Kildare's attainder—

The case of Lord Kildare will, perhaps, more than any other circumstance, throw a light upon the real character of the cardinal.

The Earl of Kildare, was accused, before the king and council, of divers high crimes, by Wolsey. He answered the cardinal's accusation with such force, that he cleared himself to the king's satisfaction. —

He was afterwards tried and condemned, and imprisoned in the Tower; but the king was prevailed upon to grant him a pardon. Wolsey, notwithstanding, had the insolence and cruelty to send orders to the lieutenant of the Tower to see him executed privately there: he, being the earl's friend, informed the king of the cardinal's orders; who in great wrath reprov'd Wolsey, and discharged the earl from his imprisonment.*

B b 2

B U C K-

* Lord Herbert.

BUCKINGHAM.

There cannot be those numberless offences
'Gainst me I can't take peace with : no black *envy*
Shall make my grave.

Mr. Steevens has rightly observed, though he adduced no instance of it, that Shakespeare sometimes uses the word *envy* instead of *malice* or *hatred*. Wolsey, in a subsequent scene with the King and Campeius, applies the word in the same sense as here : speaking of the intended trial for the divorce, he says,

Who can be angry now ? what *envy* reach you ?

'What malicious tongues will now dare to reproach your conduct, since you have submitted to a fair and impartial trial ?' — The Duke, most feelingly and like a Christian, declares, that malice shall have no share in his latter end : 'I shall deprive bad minds of the power to slander my last moments with a report of my dying with a rancorous or unforgiving temper.'

BUCK-

B U C K I N G H A M .

———— I was lord-high-constable
And Duke of Buckingham.

The office of high-constable of England
expired with this nobleman.

I D E M .

———— I had my trial,
And must needs say a noble one.

The king, knowing that the evidence against the unfortunate duke was so full and complete that he could not possibly be acquitted, sent him word that he should enjoy all the advantages which the law would allow him. However, the king robbed him, in one material instance, of his right; as a peer of the realm he had a just claim to be tried by all the peers. The Duke of Buckingham's jury consisted only of a duke, a marquis, seven earls, and twelve barons.

Although there is no reason to doubt the justness of the sentence passed upon Buck-

ingham, his crimes proceeded rather from levity and folly than deliberate malice. The people loved him, and were in hopes the king would have extended mercy to him, But his alliance to the crown prevented all hopes of pardon. Henry's jealousy of all claims of that kind rendered him implacable. His father, Henry VII, murdered the Earl of Warwick for no other reason but his having a better title to the crown than himself. The greatest crime, too, of Mary Queen of Scotland, in the eyes of Elizabeth, was the goodness of her title; and James, her son, shamefully persecuted Lady Arabella Stewart, because she was akin to the royal family.

To the reader of this play the part of Buckingham may seem to be of little or no consequence; but there is an affecting pathos in it which the actor of merit will discover and exemplify in action and elocution. When the play was revived, as above related, the incomparable Wilks thought Buckingham worthy his attention.

In

In the first scene, at the opening of the play, the resentment and indignation of the character to Wolsey broke out, in Wilks, with an impetuosity resembling hasty sparks of fire; his action was vehement, and his motion quick and disturbed. His demeanour, when condemned, was gentle, graceful, and pathetic; his grief was manly, resigned, and temperate: such as became the nobleman and the Christian.

F I R S T G E N T L E M A N .

—Merely to revenge him on the emperor,
For not bestowing on him, at his asking,
The archbishopric of Toledo.

Nothing could satisfy the unbounded ambition and avarice of Wolsey. — Shakespeare is justified in alledging this fact. The Archbishop of Toledo is primate of Spain, great chancellor of Castile, and proprietor of seventeen towns and a great number of villages; his yearly revenue is computed at 75000*l*. The King of Spain generally re-

serves it for the youngest branch of his family,

Scene II.

N O R F O L K.

— This imperious man will work us
From princes into pages.

Wolfey had no less than nine noblemen
in his retinue,

S U F F O L K.

As I am made without him, so I'll stand.

Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who married the Queen - dowager of France, sister to Henry VIII. was one of the most amiable noblemen of the age he lived in : brave, generous, condescending, and humane, his popularity was the well-earned tribute of his virtues. That Henry, though precipitate, tyrannical, and cruel, was capable of sincere and cordial friendship, is apparent from his inviolable attachment to Suffolk and Cranmer : the latter he protected from all his powerful enemies, and the

the former he loved with a friendship that was inviolable. When news was brought of Suffolk's death, he was sitting in council.—He embraced the occasion to express his deep regret for the loss of his brother, and to bear testimony to his virtues: he averred that, during the whole period of their friendship, which grew up from infancy, he had never attempted to injure an adversary, nor had ever, in his hearing, dropped a word to the disadvantage of any man. Then, looking round him, he said, with some emotion, ‘ Is there any of you, my lords, can say so much ?’ When Henry spoke these words, he discovered in their faces that confusion which is the companion of conscious guilt.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIX.

Word goodness explained. — Pace, why called a fool. — Validity of the King's marriage tried. — Clement VII. — The Queen not placed properly at the trial. — Character of Ferdinand King of Spain. — Mrs. Porter's elevated manner. — Booth's 'Go thy ways, Kate.' — Quin. — The King's scruples. — Mrs. Pritchard. — Mrs. Porter. — Booth and Macklin. — Henry's confessor. — The King's true reasons for a divorce. — 'Weigh out afflictions' explained. — Fuller's character of Henry. — Reasons for Wolsey's behaviour in the business of the divorce. — Henry's symbol of displeasure.

W O L S E Y.

Must now confess, if he have any *goodness*,
The trial just and noble.

THE word *goodness* stands here for *impartiality, justice, or equity*.

C A M P E I U S.

Kept Pace a foreign man.

It is no uncommon practice of ministers, when they cannot mould an officer of state to their own fashion, to keep him at distance from the court, under some honourable title abroad.

W O L S E Y.

————— He was a fool,
For he would needs be virtuous.

The Cardinal means, that Pace would have the assurance to think for himself. — And, for this perverseness, Wolsey ruined him.

H E N R Y.

H E N R Y.

————— O my lord,
 Would it not grieve an able man to leave
 So sweet a bedfellow ?

It is remarkable that Henry and Queen Katharine lay in the same bed till the trial for the validity of the marriage was opened.

Scene between Anne Bullen and the Old Lady.

O L D L A D Y.

Pluck off a little.

The Lady, in my opinion, means, —
 ‘ Draw aside that affected veil of modesty
 you have put on. Do not disguise your
 sentiments with artificial coverings.’

C H A M B E R L A I N.

————— And who knows yet,
 But from this lady may proceed a gem
 To lighten all this isle ?

This gem was Queen Elizabeth ; and
 this may serve amongst other proofs that
 the

the author wrote this play during the life of that princefs.

O L D L A D Y.

How tastes it ? Is it bitter ? Forty-pence—no.

The fee of an attorney for advice, as well as term-fee, was then, as now, 3 s. 4 d.

Act. II. Scene IV.

The Trial.

The trial of the validity of a king's marriage, before persons delegated for that purpose, in a court where the royal persons were summoned, and did actually appear, was an occurrence new and extraordinary, which drew the attention of all Europe. The legality or illegality of marriages amongst the great, before that period, had been determined at the court of Rome by the sole power of the pontiff. — Nor would Clement VII. the then reigning pope, have parted with such a privilege, had not the reformation, which began

gan about twelve years before the trial by Luther, made such an alarming progress as induced him to act cautiously with a prince of Henry's resolute and undaunted temper. — However, the pope still kept in his hands the power of shortening or lengthening the process, and of establishing or dissolving the court, which was opened, at Black-Friers, May 31, 1529.

In the distribution of the several persons who composed this learned and illustrious assembly, Shakspeare had, I think, with great propriety, seated the Queen at some distance from the King. Why modern managers should all concur to make an alteration in his stage-œconomy I can discover no good reason: for if, in the infancy of the stage, when they had scarcely room to display their figures to advantage, they could place a throne or seat for such a personage as a Queen, surely, with a much larger area, every embellishment and necessary decoration need not be omitted. — Besides, as it is now managed, the Queen

is supposed to wait like a common suitor or culprit till she is summoned into the court: whereas the rising from her seat, when called by the Crier, would be attended with more consequence, and give an opportunity to the actress by her deportment to gain the attention of the spectators.

Q U E E N.

Sir, I desire you do me right and justice,
And to bestow your pity, &c.

The greatest part of Katharine's speech is indeed faithfully transcribed from our Chronicles, but much heightened by pathetic expostulation, warmth of passion, and dignity of resentment.

Q U E E N.

———— Ferdinand,

My father, King of Spain, was reckon'd one
The wisest prince that there had reign'd by many
A year before.

If possessing the art of acquiring territories by fraud, perfidy, cruelty, and injustice ;

tice; if the putting in practice every machination to circumvent and betray; can be termed the arts of wisdom, Ferdinand, called the Catholic, King of Spain, was of all kings the wisest. Strange, that the commission of enormities, which would subject a private man to an ignominious punishment, should be esteemed meritorious in a crowned head!

W O L S E Y.

————— I do profess,
You speak not like yourself.

The Cardinal's defence of his conduct is temperate and artful. Shakspeare, who in this play treads no ground without warrant, has in this scene also traced our best Chronicles.

Q U E E N.

————— I must tell you,
That you tender more your person's honour
Than your high profession spiritual.

Wolsey was supposed not to have favoured the cause of the queen, from private animosity :

animosity: she had publicly reproached him with his licentious manner of living.

Mrs. Pritchard's Queen Katharine has been much approved, and especially in this scene of the trial. She certainly was in behaviour easy, and in speaking natural and familiar; but the situation of the character required more force in utterance and more dignity in action. Mrs. Porter's manner was elevated to the rank of the great person she represented. Her kneeling to the King was the effect of majesty in distress and humbled royalty; it was indeed highly affecting; the suppression of her tears when she reproached the Cardinal, bespoke the tumultuous conflict in her mind, before she burst into that manifestation of indignity, she felt in being obliged to answer so unworthy an interrogator.

K I N G.

Go thy ways, Kate!

Mr. Macklin, our theatrical Nestor, will tell us, that Booth pronounced these

four short words with such happy emphasis, conveying at once characteristical humour and liberal acknowledgement of Katharine's virtuous excellence, that the audience not only applauded, but admired, the speaker.

Quin borrowed something of Booth's manner in uttering this valediction; but I am afraid he mixed in it a little of Falstaff's style.

K I N G.

Oft have hinder'd

The passages made towards it.

That is, ' You have rather thrown obstacles in the way of this business than promoted it.'

I D E M.

My conscience first receiv'd a tenderness
And *prick*.

Prick of conscience, says Dr. Johnson, was the term in confession; and the sweet prick of conscience was transferred from the popish priests to the Calvinist pastors, especially those of Scotland.

I D E M.

I D E M.

——— For her male issue,
Or died when they were made, or shortly after
This world had air'd them.

The King, it is said, was struck with
this misfortune, because the curse of being
childless is the very threatening of the Mo-
saical law against those who espouse the
brother's widow.

I D E M.

——— I began, in private;
With you, my lord of Lincoln.

The Bishop of Lincoln was Henry's
confessor.

I D E M.

How under my oppression I did *reek*.

Reek is a coarse, though significant,
metaphor, taken from a man's sweating
under a heavy burden.

C c 2

I D E M.

I D E M.

To you, my lord of Canterbury.

Warham was then Archbishop of Canterbury, and not Cranmer, as hinted in some editions of this play.

I D E M.

Prove but our marriage lawful, —————

————— we are contented

To wear our mortal state to come with her,
Kath'rine, our queen, before the primeſt creature
That's paragon'd in the world.

Notwithstanding this very public and solemn proteſtation, which I think Shakſpeare has faithfully tranſcribed from the Chronicle, Henry's private reaſons, which he ſent to the pope, contain very different motives. The following is a tranſlation from a curious Latin record :

“ There are, beſides, ſome particular reaſons to be laid before his holineſs in private, though not proper to be committed to writing ; upon which account, as well as by reaſon of ſome diſtempers
which

which the queen labours under, without hopes of remedy, as, likewise, through some certain scruples which disturb the king's conscience, *his majesty neither can nor will, for the future, look upon her, or live with her, for his lawful wife, let the consequence be what it will.*"

The king's ardent passion to have male issue seems to have been the great motive for his divorce from Katharine. He had a son, by her, christened Henry, who died two months after his birth: and this, he used to say, was a judgement upon him for marrying his brother's wife. The same eager desire to have a male child, and his disappointment, occasioned his unconquerable aversion to Anne Bullen. This unhappy lady was delivered of a dead male; thence, it is supposed, he sought all methods to ruin her.

I D E M.

My learned and well-beloved servant, Cranmer,
Pr'ythee return——

Quin spoke this apostrophe to Cranmer in a low voice, but so melodiously and well-tuned, as to be heard distinctly in every part of the theatre,

I D E M.

———Break up the court.

Notwithstanding Shakspeare has, in this passage, seemed to have dissolved this famous assembly, it actually continued to sit and do business for some time. The king was so angry at their dilatory proceedings, that he employed the duke of Suffolk as a messenger to them, who sharply reproved their studied procrastination; and, vehemently striking the table with his hand, he told Wolsey, "That it never was well with England when cardinals had the management of affairs." — Wolsey replied shortly, "That, if it had not been for one cardinal, the duke of Suffolk would not have kept his head on his shoulders."*

Act

* Fuller.

A C T III. Scene I.

Queen Katharine, Wolsey, and Campeius.

This scene is omitted, in the representation, as tedious and unnecessary. However, as it farther displays Queen Katharine's temper and disposition, and contains many characteristical features of that unhappy lady, it well deserves our attention. It is, in general, a transcript from Hollinghead, paraphrased and enlarged with correspondent matter.

Q U E E N.

——— I was set at work

Amongst my maids——

When Queen Katharine was informed that the cardinals Wolsey and Campeius desired audience, she came to them with a skein of thread about her neck; nor would she retire with them into her private chamber, as they requested, till after a conference such as the poet has given us.

I D E M.

——— Nay, forsooth my friends,

They that must weigh out my afflictions,

This *weighing out of afflictions* is, I think, a metaphor taken from the unloading of a

ship. Those friends, who are most capable of easing me of afflictions, are at a great distance from me,

Q U E E N.

Almost forgot my prayers to content him !
And am I thus rewarded ?

Fuller's short character of Katharine is no ill answer to the lady's complaint :

" Queen Katharine's age was above her husband's, her gravity above her age, more pious at her beads than pleasant in her bed, a better woman than a wife, and a fitter wife for any prince than Henry."

Scene II.

Lord-Chamberlain, Norfolk, Suffolk, and
Surry.

C H A M B E R L A I N.

The cardinal's letter, to the pope, miscarried,
And came to the eye of the king, wherein was read
How that the cardinal did intreat his holiness
To stay the judgement of the divorce.

This is conformable to Hollingshead's relation.

Historians

Historians are at a loss to account for Wolsey's behaviour in the trial for the divorce. He certainly had the whole management of the business in his own power; for Campeius was but second in the commission, and, consequently, he might have terminated the matter to his master's wish. At this distance of time it is difficult to ascertain the real motive by which Wolsey was influenced. The king's passions, he knew, would brook no controul: it was dangerous to oppose them. But, it should be remembered, that the cardinal's ambition aimed at the triple crown, and that, during the trial, Pope Clement was seized with so dangerous an illness that it was feared it would terminate only with his life. Wolsey, who had before been twice a candidate for the papacy, again had his hopes renewed. Had he decided the business of the divorce in favour of the king, he would have lost the interposition of the emperor, Queen Katharine's nephew, without whose interest he could not possibly succeed. Clement's

ment's recovery put an end to Wolsey's dream of the papacy, and exposed him to the resentment of Anne Bullen and her party, who took indefatigable pains to incense the king against him. This part of Wolsey's history, respecting the papacy, has not, except in one place, been touched upon by Shakspere.

S U F F O L K.

——— I do assure you
The king cry'd Ha ! at this.

C H A M B E R L A I N.

——— Now God incense him,
And let him cry Ha ! louder.

Henry's sign of displeasure was usually marked by a loud explosion of the interjection Ha ! or Ho ! and this behaviour, more suitable to the hog-driver than the prince, served to terrify and keep in awe his slavish and timorous courtiers. For this prognostic was matter of the utmost dismay to them.

There is a story, in Fuller's Worthies, of a weak effeminate boy, who personated Henry VIII. in a certain play written on
that

that story, who cried ho! in so feeble a tone, that one of his brother-performers told him, ' that he acted more like a mouse than a man; and that, if he spoke ho! with no better spirit, his parliament would not grant him a penny of money.'

CHAP.

CHAPTER XX.

Cibber snuffing a candle. — Nobles betting for and against Wolsey's favour with the King. — Wolsey's immense riches. — Henry's anger, as expressed by Booth. — Surry's impetuosity. — His character. — Curious article against Wolsey. — Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. — Explanation of 'cherish those that hate you.' — The great art of Shakspeare in a scene of the 3d act. — Cibber and Mossop criticised. — Digges commended. — Wolsey's present of a fool to the King. — Banished to his diocese by Norfolk. — Arrested for high treason. — His death. — Wolsey's ambition to be pope. — Hume refuted. — Wolsey's love of learning and encouragement of learned men. — Erasmus and Wolsey. — The latter's selfishness, pride, and cruelty. — His superstitious and vindictive temper. — Soft music. — Vision of angels. — Bayes's grand dance. — Queen Katharine's character. — Mrs. Pritchard

Pritchard and Mrs. Porter. — Mrs. Willis and Theophilus Cibber. — Gardiner's character. — Jonson's, Hippius's, and Taswell's, representation of him. — The King, Surrey, and Norfolk. — Power of brass to invigorate the eye-sight. — Plutarch and Macrobius. — Character of Queen Elizabeth, as drawn by Shakspeare. — Dr. Hurd and Mr. Hume. — England most indebted to her worst princes. — Calderone's Spanish play on the subject of Henry VIII.

W O L S E Y.

This candle burns not clear; 'tis I must snuff it,
And out it goes.

THE action of Colley Cibber, in speaking this, I have heard much commended: he imitated, with his fore-finger and thumb, the extinguishing of a candle with a pair of snuffers. But surely the reader will laugh at such mimicry, which, if practised, would make a player's action as ridiculous as a monkey's.

Enter

Enter the King, reading a schedule.

The whole scene, to the end of the third act, is the genuine contrivance of the poet. — Though the King had given Wolsey evident marks of his displeasure, and often rated him in his boisterous manner,—and particularly once, at Grafton, in Northamptonshire, when the nobility, who hated him, laid bets for and against his retaining the King's affection, — yet, at that time, we have authority to say, Wolsey stood his ground so well, that he departed from the King's presence with marks of favour rather than displeasure. — This was the last time of Henry and Wolsey's meeting.

K I N G.

What piles of wealth hath he accumulated !

It is impossible to read the inventory of Wolsey's riches, as it stands in our Chronicles, without astonishment and indignation.—The walls of his palace were covered
with

with cloth of gold or cloth of silver; his cupboard contained massy plate of gold.— A thousand pieces of fine Holland, and the rest of the furniture in proportion. — To estimate his riches at half a million will not, by those who carefully attend to authentic historians, be supposed to overrate them. How impoverished and wretched must the people be, when a prodigal king, a grasping minister, and a slavish parliament, all combined to drain them of their money!

NORFOLK.

———— My lord, we have
 Stood here observing him. Some strange commotion
 Is in his mind.

The description of Wolsey's deportment during the perturbation of his mind, so strongly depicted in his soliloquy, is an evident proof, that, although Shakespeare was not a skilful actor himself, he knew perfectly what was due to character. He has here given a lesson to the representer of
 Wolsey

Wolsey which the most consummate player may be proud to learn.

K I N G.

————— And then to breakfast— *with*
What appetite you may.

Henry's anger should be reserved by the actor till he pronounces, 'With what appetite you may.' This is confirmed by what the Cardinal says immediately after the King's departure :

What sudden anger's this ?

The tremendous look which Booth put on, with his rapid and vehement expression, fully corresponded with the design of the author.

N O R F O L K.

Deliver up the great seal.

The King sent for the great seal, but Wolsey refused it, as Shakspeare has recorded it ; nor did he return it till the King wrote to him, and commanded him to deliver it.

S U R R Y.

By my soul,
 Your long coat, priest, protects you; thou should'st
 else

Feel my sword in the life-blood of thee.

In this vehement burst of passion, the writer has drawn the characteristical blemish of Surry: brave, learned, generous, and accomplished, with many splendid qualities, which equally gained him the love and admiration of his own countrymen and foreigners, he was sometimes betrayed into that warmth of temper which justly exposed him to reprehension. In a dispute once with Wolsey, he was so far transported beyond himself as to draw his dagger.*

The resentment which the earl felt to the minister, on account of the part he bore in the trial of his father-in-law, the Duke of Buckingham, induced our poet to make use of his agency to reproach the Cardinal,

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with

* The people of England can, at this time, boast of an Earl of Surry, who is a true friend of liberty, and an undaunted supporter of the constitution of his country, who enjoys all the virtues of his great ancestor unmixed with his excesses.

with more impetuosity and bitterness than he allotted to any of the other peers.

S U R R Y.

First, that, without the King's consent, —
You wrought to be a legate.

The assuming the power of a legate was expressly contrary to an act passed in the reign of Richard II. and left the offender out of the king's protection. It was, however, disingenuous and cruel to try the Cardinal, upon an obsolete act, and for exercising that power, in the face of the world, with the King's consent and approbation.

Amongst above forty articles, which were laid to his charge, there was a very singular one: 'That, knowing himself contaminated with the great pox, he had the impudence to breathe in the King's presence.'

W O L S E Y.

————— My high-blown pride
At length broke under me.

The

The props, by which Wolsey's mind was supported, were pomp, pride, grandeur, state, and magnificence: these once failing, the man had nothing from within to support his spirit, he had no whispering comforts from an unsullied conscience to bear him up against the tide of adversity which was ready to overwhelm him.

W O L S E Y.

Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you!

With what facility do we renounce what we can no longer keep! And how like children do men behave, when they give up those playthings from which they are debarred!

I D E M.

May have a tomb of orphans tears wept on him.

'May his tomb be washed with orphans tears, in gratitude for his acts of justice to them.'

Wolsey himself exercised the office of chancellor without reproach.

C R O M W E L L.

— That Cranmer is return'd with welcome,
Install'd Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

This is a sufficient proof, that Suffolk, in a former part of the scene, meant that Cranmer was really returned with a full approbation of his opinions; and not, as Mr. Tyrwhit suggested, that he was come back only by his schedules, or transcripts, confirming the validity of a divorce, from foreign universities; neither is it likely that Cranmer would send that by another which he could bring himself.

W O L S E Y.

Cherish those hearts that *bate* you.

Dr. Warburton alters *bate* to *wait*; but this editor is known to be an arbitrary foister of his own fancies into the text. — He says Wolsey neglected his dependents; the contrary, in general, is true; when he and his retinue parted, mutual manifestations of grief and tenderness were seen
on

on both sides. ‘ Cherish those hearts that hate you’ was spoken in condemnation of his own conduct, who had provoked the nobility by his pride and insolence, rather than he would soothe them by gentleness. His prosecution of Buckingham brought against him the family of Norfolk and all their friends. But, again, ‘ Cherish those hearts that hate you’ is, according to the precept in the Gospel, ‘ Bless them that curse you.’ This is a lesson which Shakspeare puts into the mouth of a heathen : Flavius, the steward, on the sight of Timon, his master, in misery, amongst other reflections, breaks out into this :

How rarely does it meet with this time’s guise,
When man was wish’d to love his enemies !

I D E M.

Had I but serv’d my God with half the zeal
I serv’d my king, he would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

This sentence, says Dr. Johnson, was really uttered by Wolfey ; but the words

D d 3

which

which he spoke after this sentence, as related by Hollinghead, are equally pathetic, and are well worth preserving: "But it is the just reward that I must receive for the diligent pains and study that I have had to do him service, not regarding my service to God, but only to satisfy his pleasure."

When we look back, and consider the foregoing scene, from the entrance of the Cardinal to his concluding speech at the end of the third act, we must confess that the poet has wrought up the whole with great dramatic skill. The historical incidents, or events, are rendered extremely interesting, while the characters and passions of the great personages introduced support the dialogue with uncommon vigour. The art of Shakspeare has, in the conclusion, rendered the man, who had been the object of our disgust and hatred, the source of tenderness and commiseration. — If the rough and bitter terms of reproach, in the mouths of princes and nobles, should

should displease a modern taste, it should be considered, that the author draws a faithful picture of manners such as he found authenticated in history, and such as, with very little variation, would in a similar situation take place in all times; for passions will eternally be the same, and speak nearly the same language.

If the representation of this scene has, in general, fallen short of the writer's intention and the spectators expectation, we must, in a great measure, attribute that to the difficulty of performing it with excellence: Colley Cibber's pride and passion, in Wolsey, were impotent and almost farcical. His grief, resignation, and tenderness, were inadequate, from a deficiency of those powers of expression which the melting tones of voice, and a corresponding propriety of gesture, can alone bestow.—Mossop was a powerful and energetic speaker of sentiment, and, sometimes, happy in the utterance of passion. But his stateliness, in a part of this scene, was without dig-

nity, and his tenderness without pathos. Digges assumed uncommon grandeur of deportment, which sometimes degenerated into bombastical strutting. To the resigned portion of the character, the grave tones of his voice were not ill-suited. Had he kept within those modest bounds prescribed by Shakspeare, he would have drawn an excellent outline of the imperious Wolsey,

ACT IV.

Scene II. Queen, Griffith, &c.

Notwithstanding his savage disposition, the king could not at once abandon his favourite minister. At different times he condescended to shew him tokens of his favour and returning friendship. The cardinal was so transported with joy on his royal master's sending him a ring, which he conceived to be a certain evidence of his protection, — that he dismounted from his horse and would receive it on his knees. To manifest his gratitude, he sent to the king, as the most valuable of all gifts, his *fool*, *Patch*, whom he had cherished as one
reserve

reserve of happiness, or, at least, amusement, in his misfortunes; but the poor cardinal was still wedded to vanity and ostentation: he travelled to York, whither he was obliged to go by order of the duke of Norfolk, who threatened, "If he refused, to tear him in pieces with his teeth.*" He travelled, I say, with a retinue of one hundred and sixty persons in order to be installed. The preparations, for this instalment, were exceedingly magnificent, and beyond all reasonable limits. This unhappy relish for human grandeur was, in all probability, the immediate cause of his ruin. Had he remained quiet in his diocese, his enemies would, perhaps, have been at a loss for matter to excite the king's anger against him; but, on the report of his ostentatious manner of living, Anne Bullen, instigated by the duke of Norfolk, her uncle, never ceased to ply the king with accusations against him, till, at last,

* Vide Cavendish.

last, Henry, notwithstanding he had granted him a pardon drawn up in the most ample terms, commanded the earl of Northumberland to arrest him for high treason, and bring him to his trial. Wolfey, who knew that his master never ruined any man by halves, dreaded the consequence so much, that, Cavendish says, he dispatched himself by a powerful dose. — He had no less, says Hollingshead, than fifty stools in one day.

Q U E E N.

——— Ever ranking himself

With princes.

The man whose ambition aimed to be superior to all crowned heads, by getting possession of the papal tiara, could never consider himself as a subject; especially when he was accosted and saluted by the flattering titles of friend, father, and counsellor, by emperors and kings. Hume is of opinion that, if Wolfey had once gained the papacy, he would have had it in his power to have amply repaid his master for
all

all marks of favour he had bestowed on him. From the arrogance of the man I should rather suspect he would have acted the part of Thomas-a-Becket, who, from a faithful servant to his prince, while a layman, proved, when raised to the see of Canterbury, the greatest opposer of his royal master's will. But, not to dwell upon conjecture, let me ask if Wolsey's promotion would have altered the state of Italy? Would not the emperor be still as powerful there as he was before the cardinal's exaltation? Would he not have found it as easy to humble him as the preceding pope, whom he had besieged in his capital and reduced to the last extremity? Wolsey must, of necessity, have adapted his politics to his situation.

Q U E E N K A T H A R I N E.

————— One that by suggestion

Ty'd all the kingdom.

I know no word more forcible, to express what seems to be the author's meaning, than *ty'd*. The insinuations
of

of an unfeeling minister, to persuade his royal master to chain down the minds of his subjects, cannot be put into stronger language. Dr. Farmer's proposed alteration of *tith'd* is inferior in its original meaning, and deficient in its general application. Dr. Farmer is a most respectable name on every account; but Mr. Tollet has very justly defended a reading which is supported by all the editions.

G R I F F I T H.

—— From his cradle,

He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one.

Wolsey's love of learning, and his constant encouragement of it, was the most amiable part of his character.

To the revival of learning in this nation he contributed more than all our clergy and nobility. His mind was susceptible of that reputation and glory which the encouragement of the fine arts and the belles-lettres can only bestow, an honour superior to the noisy fame of military achievements. Wolsey

sey was one of the select few of his age who enjoyed a just and elegant taste for literature. An historian* has preserved some extracts from a method of teaching and educating youth, addressed by him to the masters of a school which he founded at Ipswich, in which he has displayed so good a style, such solid judgement, and a taste so refined, that it reflects the highest honour upon the writer. When Wolsey speaks of the fifth class, there is, in his instructions, something so truly liberal, that I cannot forbear transcribing the passage: —

‘Imprimis, hoc unum admonendum censuerimus, ut neque plagis severioribus, neque vultuosis minis, aut ulla tyrannidis specie, tenera pubes afficiatur: hac enim injuria, ingenii alacritas aut extingui, aut magna ex parte obtundi solet.’

‘Above all things, I think it proper to admonish you, that tender youth should not be afflicted with severe scourgings, with boisterous threatenings,
nor

* Guthrie.

44 DRAMATIC MISCELLANIES.

not with any species of tyranny. For, by such treatment, a lively genius is either quite overwhelmed, or in a great measure blunted.'

In the conclusion of advice to the seventh class, wherein he recommends the indulging them with suitable amusements, he discovers a most amiable and benevolent spirit. Milton, in his letter to Mr. Hartlib on education, has happily extended and improved this part of the Cardinal's plan.

I D E M.

Exceeding wise, fair-spoken, and persuading.

In confirmation of this part of Wolsey's character, we have the authority of Erasmus. "His manners (says this writer in his Epistles) betray nothing of his birth; he diligently employs himself in reviving the liberal arts." In fine, York-place, like the houses of Lucullus, Cicero, Atticus, and other great men of Rome, was an agreeable retreat for all men of letters, without

without distinction. For the compiling a collection of books and MSS. that might vie with the Alexandrian library, he employed learned men, all over Europe, or wherever he could find them. No mechanic ever toiled more assiduously, in his profession, than Wolsey did to adorn England with luminaries of learning. This anxiety of the Cardinal, to encourage literature, and to introduce the best scholars in Europe amongst his countrymen, seems utterly incompatible with Dr. Middleton's account of Wolsey's speech to the clergy, in which he publicly forswarned them, that, if they did not destroy the press, the press would destroy them.*

I D E M.

——— Ever witness for him,
 Ipswich and Oxford I one of which fell with him;
 The other, though unfinish'd, yet so famous,
 So excellent in art, and still so rising,
 That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue.

There

* Dedication to Middleton's Letter from Rome.

There is, in this eulogium of Christchurch college, at Oxford, something, surely, that looks prophetic. No other seminary in Europe has perhaps been so fertile in persons famous for useful learning, extent of genius, and elegance of taste in the belles lettres.

It is with a degree of pleasure I have selected, from the best historians, passages to confirm that draught of the shining part of Wolsey's portrait given by Shakspeare. But it cannot be controverted that the dark shades of it wanted the brightest tints to set them off. The eminent superiority of his genius he principally employed to the advancement of his own power, interest, and grandeur; his ambition was as insatiable as his avarice, and with them his pride and cruelty went an equal pace. He gave certain indications of a little mind, for he was superstitious and vindictive.

One of those enormous crosses, which always accompanied him wherever he went, happening, at an entertainment, to fall,

fall, and hurt one of his retinue, he asked whether the blow had fetched blood? and, being answered in the affirmative, he cried out *Malum omen!* and retired to his chamber.

During the time that he was a school-master, a quarrel happened between him and Sir James Paulet, who, to gratify his anger, had Wolsey put into the stocks. — Many years after this fray, when the Cardinal was advanced to the post of lord-high-chancellor of England, he sent for Paulet; and, after reproaching him sternly for his former behaviour to him, he, by his own authority, obliged him to remain in London five or six years.*

Q U E E N K A T H A R I N E.

Cause the musicians play me that *sad note*
I nam'd my knell.

Sad note is, 'that soft and melancholy
air which pleases me.'

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The

* Hollinghead.

The Emperor Charles V. Katharine's nephew, when retired to the monastery of Just, in Estremadura, caused the solemn dirge to be played before him which was to be performed at his funeral obsequies.

The Vision of Angels.

No dramatic author ever took such indefatigable pains to feed the eye and the ear, as well as the understanding, as Shakespeare. What effect this vision might produce on the audience originally is not now to be learned. That it was represented before Mrs. Betterton, when she acted Qu. Katharine, soon after the Restoration, is certain. Though the author shews fancy in this little pantomime, yet it seems fitter, at present, to tempt an audience to mirth and ridicule than to serious attention. The grave congées, solemn dancings, and stately courtesies, of these aërial beings, put us in mind of Bayes's grand dance; and perhaps the Duke of Buckingham borrowed a hint of it from this vision. In the third
act

act of the Rehearsal, Bayes, chiding the players for their awkwardness, tells them they 'dance worse than the fat spirits in the Tempest or the angels in Henry VIII.'

M E S S E N G E R.

An't like your grace ———

K A T H A R I N E.

————— You are a saucy fellow.

The Messenger, forgetting to pay Katharine the respect due to majesty, raises her indignation even in her last agony; and this is truly a part of that lady's character. All the homage, which was paid to her before the divorce, she determined to preserve to the last. The king employed commissioners to settle her house as Princess-dowager of Wales, who would have placed servants about her, to treat her as such; but this imposition she rejected with disdain.

The virtues of Queen Katharine are celebrated by all historians. Her form was

little calculated to retain the affections of such a man as Henry ; but, though he could not love her, such was her conformity to his will, and such the innocence of her life, he ever spoke of her with great respect, and professed the highest reverence of her virtues.

That Katharine should persist in denying, with an oath, the consummation of her marriage with Prince Arthur, considering the evidence which was produced of it, historians in general seem to wonder : but, when we reflect what herself and her daughter, the Princess Mary, might lose by owning the completion of the marriage, we shall rather, I believe, pity her situation, which reduced her to so unhappy a dilemma, than condemn her perseverance. The absolution of a confessor might operate like a charm upon her mind ; nor is it, I hope, uncharitable to suppose, that such a cordial would not be refused.

During this truly-pathetic scene, the behaviour of Mrs. Pritchard, the representer

fenter of Katharine, was respectable ; but her best efforts could not reach the grace and dignity of gesture, much less the heart-touching tenderness, of Mrs. Porter. In this actress it was observed, that a very bad voice did not obstruct the forcible expression of excessive grief.

Act. V. Scene the first.

Shakspeare has selected such parts of Henry's life as would rather reflect honour than disgrace on his memory. Though, in general, he had confined himself to that period of his history which is comprehended in about twelve or thirteen years, from the attainder of Buckingham to the christening of Queen Elizabeth, — he has, notwithstanding, by the help of an anachronism, contrived to insert the insidious plot of Cranmer's enemies to ruin him in the king's favour, and Henry's generous resentment of their treachery.

CRANMER.

The *good* I stand on.

The *good* means 'the foundation of truth I rely on.'

KING.

——— Is the queen deliver'd?

Say ay, and of a boy!

By what has been already said, it appears the king most ardently wished for male issue.—This short and quick interrogation strongly marks it. Anne Bullen was, about two years afterwards, delivered of a dead male child: and this circumstance, above all others, alienated the king's affection from her.

OLD LADY.

An hundred marks! By this light I'll have more!

Mrs. Willis, a most excellent actress in low humour, played this small, and, I believe, generally thought, insignificant part, many years. She threw into this old lady,

as

as well as into every thing she acted, so much truth and nature, that the audience never dismissed her without marks of approbation.

Let me here give an anecdote of her and Theophilus Cibber.—I may not, perhaps, find a place for it elsewhere. She lived to a great age with its worst companion, poverty. A charitable collection was set on foot for her relief amongst the players, who never turn their backs upon want and affliction. The Cibber was then very young and wild. When she applied to him his finances were so low, that he denied her with the excuse that he had a large family. “O dear, Sir, (said Mrs. Willis,) how can that be? you have neither wife nor child.” “It may be so,—but I have a large family of vices, madam!”

C H A N C E L L O R.

Speak to the business, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Theobald, forgetting that Shakspeare had, in this instance, broke through his original design, by introducing the con-

E e 4

spiracy

spiracy against Cranmer, will have it that the chancellor of the scene was Sir Thomas Audley, successor of Sir Thomas More; but he died in 1544, two years before the plan was concerted to ruin the archbishop, Wriothesly was Audley's successor, and, consequently, the chancellor whom Shakspeare meant.

G A R D I N E R.

Which reformation must be sudden too !

So averse was Gardiner to all innovation whatsoever, and so firm a friend to established error, in matters of mere indifference, that he opposed, with all his might, the more accurate pronunciation of the Greek tongue, introduced by some learned men into our universities. The Papists adhered to the old method, and the Protestants favoured the new. This was a reason sufficiently powerful, with this hot zealot, to employ the authority of the king and council to suppress any proposed reformation in this particular, by perpetuating the corrupt sound of the Greek alphabet,

phabet. The penalties of disobedience, inflicted by Gardiner, were whipping, degradation, and expulsion.

C R O M W E L L.

——— Would you were half so honest !

Shakspeare throws out no idle or ill-founded charges. When Gardiner was ambassador at the court of France, being extremely averse to the progress of any ecclesiastical reformation, on which he found his master very intent, it was suspected that he betrayed the interest of Henry to the French king.

S U R R E Y.

May it please your majesty———

K I N G.

No, Sir, it does not please me.

This angry interruption of the king is always uttered with vehemence. And this event falling out a year before the king's death, the author seems to point out Henry's fixed aversion to the earl, whom with his father, the duke of Norfolk, he prosecuted

ted

ted with inexpiable rage. The pretended crime of both was quartering the king's arms with their own; a practice justified by the heralds. For this, and other frivolous pretences, the earl was tried by a jury of commoners and condemned to die. His defence was noble, becoming his birth and his undaunted spirit. He was executed about ten days before Henry died. The humble submission of the duke availed him nothing: all his services, in defeating the Scots and subduing several rebellions within the kingdom, were forgotten. The king apprehended that the duke and his son would disturb the settlement of government which he had planned for Edward, his successor; he therefore determined to get rid of them both.—Nor could his own approaching death, nor the sense of the enormous cruelties he had committed, soften his savage and obdurate mind. Being unable to sign his name to the warrant for the duke's execution, he made use of a seal contrived for that purpose; happily
the

the king died before the day appointed for Norfolk's execution. The council thought it would be unpopular to begin the new reign with the death of so great and popular a man as the duke of Norfolk.

G A R D I N E R.

With a true heart and brother's love.

The king obliges Gardiner to embrace Cranmer twice. The coldness of the latter, who could not conceal his hatred at the first embrace, causes a smothered laugh in the spectators : but when, at the king's command, he is obliged to be more in earnest, his apparently assumed alacrity raises a general burst of laughter and much loud clapping.

The chaste manner of Ben Jonson, the actor, would admit of no farce or buffoonery, in personating the splenetic Gardiner. He preserved all the decorum proper to the character of a bishop and privy-counsellor. Hippisley went a step farther, and added some strokes of humour, which approached to grimace ; and this caused a
mirth

mirth unsuitable to the character of the persons. But Taswell's Gardiner degenerated into absolute trick and buffoonery, and, when he followed Cranmer, at the close of the scene, to make the upper gallery sport, he held his crutch over his head. This was the more inexcusable in him, as he wanted not judgement to inform him better, but he pitifully sacrificed his knowledge of propriety to the pleasure of diverting the most ignorant part of the audience, for which he sometimes paid very dear; for the judicious part of the spectators exploded, by a hiss, such violent misrepresentation.

Scene III.

P O R T E R.

He should be a brasier by his face, for, on my conscience, twenty of the dog-days reign in his nose.

Our author seems fond of exercising his wit on pimpled faces and carbuncled noses, and Bardolph is introduced into the play of Harry IV. for no other reason.

‘A brasier, says Dr. Johnson, signifies a man that manufactures brass, and a mass
of

of metal occasionally heated to convey warmth; both are here understood." I should think that here the latter only was meant. Of this, we are certain, that the ancients were of opinion that all manufacturers of brass were remarkable for vigour in the eyes and happiness of sight.

In the *Odyssæy*, book the 13th, Homer calls brass *ευηνορα χαλκον*, which is translated *Vires honestans æs*. In the *Symposiaks* of Plutarch, book the 3d, there is a very curious observation upon the power of brass to invigorate the eye-sight, and even to restore lost eye-lashes. I will give the passage as I find it almost verbally translated by Macrobius, in the 7th book of his *Saturnalia*: "Qui in metallo æris morantur semper oculorum sanitate pollent, et quibus ante palpebræ nudatæ fuerant illinc convestiuntur. Aura enim quæ ex ære procedit, in oculos incidens, haurit et exsiccat quod male influit, unde et Homerus modo *ευηνορα χαλκον*, modo *νωροπα χαλκον*, has causas secutus, appellat." Brass seems
to

to have the same power to exhilarate the sight that Venus had to give brilliance to the eyes of her son :

Et lætos oculis affarat honores.

VIRGIL.

C R A N M E R E.

— She shall be

A pattern to all princes living with her,
And all that shall succeed.

This character of Elizabeth, drawn by Shakspeare, is not unlike to that entertained by most Englishmen and *all* foreigners till very lately. It is now become almost a fashion to declaim violently against her, and represent her as a most disagreeable woman and a tyrannical princess.

A very elegant writer has, in a dialogue between three eminent persons, composed a most severe inquisition into her private and public conduct. A detection of deformities saved from oblivion, the publication of which can answer no rational purpose, might, I think, with submission, have been spared. Erase the
name

name of Elizabeth from the catalogue of good English monarchs, and I believe the acutest fight will scarcely be able to point out one from the Conquest to the Revolution: I mean, by a good prince, one that consults, in the general tenor of his conduct, the real interest of the people. It is pleasant enough to find, that Mr. Addison, who, in all the writings in which he had occasion to mention this lady, spoke of her with the highest eulogium, is, in this dialogue, made to hold the scalping-knife, and dissect her with a severity and keenness very different from his usual style of writing. This is very strangely accounted for by the reverend and learned writer, who tells us, that Addison's public and private opinion of this great princess were very discordant. This exoteric and esoteric doctrine is extremely fanciful and dangerous; for, according to this principle, Dr. Hurd's name may, by some future writer, be made use of as a panegyrist of Elizabeth; and Lord Bolingbroke, who
in

in his writings extols the character and political conduct of this queen beyond measure, may be introduced as a most bitter satirist against her.

After all, if we examine her merit fairly, it must be from a different principle than that which seems to have guided the pen of this eminent writer. We should consider her as living at a time when the prerogative was superior to law, and not as if she had reigned when the boundaries between the prince and people were fixed at the Revolution. To bring her conduct to a test, on doctrines and customs established at this late period, would be to try her on an *ex post facto* law.

Mr. Hume, in a comprehensive and masterly manner, has fairly and accurately drawn the portrait of Elizabeth. He has candidly separated the public from the private character; he has considered her as a rational being, placed in authority and entrusted with the government of mankind. We may, says this sagacious writer, find
it

it difficult to reconcile our fancy to her as a wife or a mistress ; but her qualities as a sovereign, though with some considerable exceptions, are the object of undisputed applause and approbation.

To enter into a full discussion of Henry's character is not the business of him who is not called upon to go farther than his original author. Shakspeare has given the fair side of this prince, and such as a daughter might behold without blushing. Had he given a second part of Henry VIII. without great softening, he must have presented such a picture, perhaps, as no audience could bear ; and yet we must not presume to doubt our author's skill in the art of colouring, or making that portrait not only bearable, but sought after, which, in the hands of another, would perhaps be utterly disgusting ; witness the Life and Death of King John, and his Richard III. princes more offensive to humanity than even Henry VIII.

- To the worst and most arbitrary kings this nation has eventually been indebted for its greatest happiness. John's excessive cruelty and oppression produced Magna Charta. The violence of Hen. VIII. freed England from papal power and the popish religion. To the weak and obstinate efforts of Ja. II. to extend the prerogative beyond law, we owe the settlement at the Revolution and the succession of the Hanover line.

In a play, called *La Cisma de Inglaterra*, Calderone, the celebrated Spanish poet, has treated of the subject of Henry's divorce. The characters of Henry, Wolsey, and Queen Katharine, are not ill sustained. The King, indeed, he makes conscious of acting ill all through the play; his violent love for Anna Bullen is the only cause of his divorcing Katharine, in which he is supported and prompted by Wolsey. The unhappy Bullen is proud, insolent, ungrateful, and lascivious, as most Roman Catholic authors represent her. Her intrigue with Carlos, the French ambassador,

der, is discovered by the King, who in his closet overhears their discourse. In a rage, he orders her to be sent to the Tower; she is beheaded, and her dead trunk is soon after brought upon the stage. In the parliament-scene, which is by far the best, the King gives his reasons for the divorce with a mixture of feigned regret and some cold compliments to Katharine; he swears to support the succession of his daughter Mary, and, without any farther ceremony, bids the Queen submit to her fate and retire to a convent; then, turning to the parliament, he declares he will make that man shorter by the head who shall presume to think that he is in the wrong:

Y el vasallo que sintiere
Mal, advierta temeroso,
Que le quite al instante
La cabeza de los ombros.

The Queen's answer is extremely affecting, and worthy the name of Calderone.— Her love to the King is not to be shaken, notwithstanding

notwithstanding the cruel sentence he has pronounced against her. With a protestation the most passionate, she declares nothing can be terrible to her except his hatred. She disclaims any appeal to the emperor, her victorious nephew ; nor can she think of entering a convent, for she is his married wife ; and concludes with calling him her lord, her happiness, her king, and dear husband.

Upon the whole, though we should allow that the play has in it many poetical beauties, yet it is, in *dramatic stamina*, greatly inferior to the English play. Calderone breaks through the unities of time and place as freely as our author.

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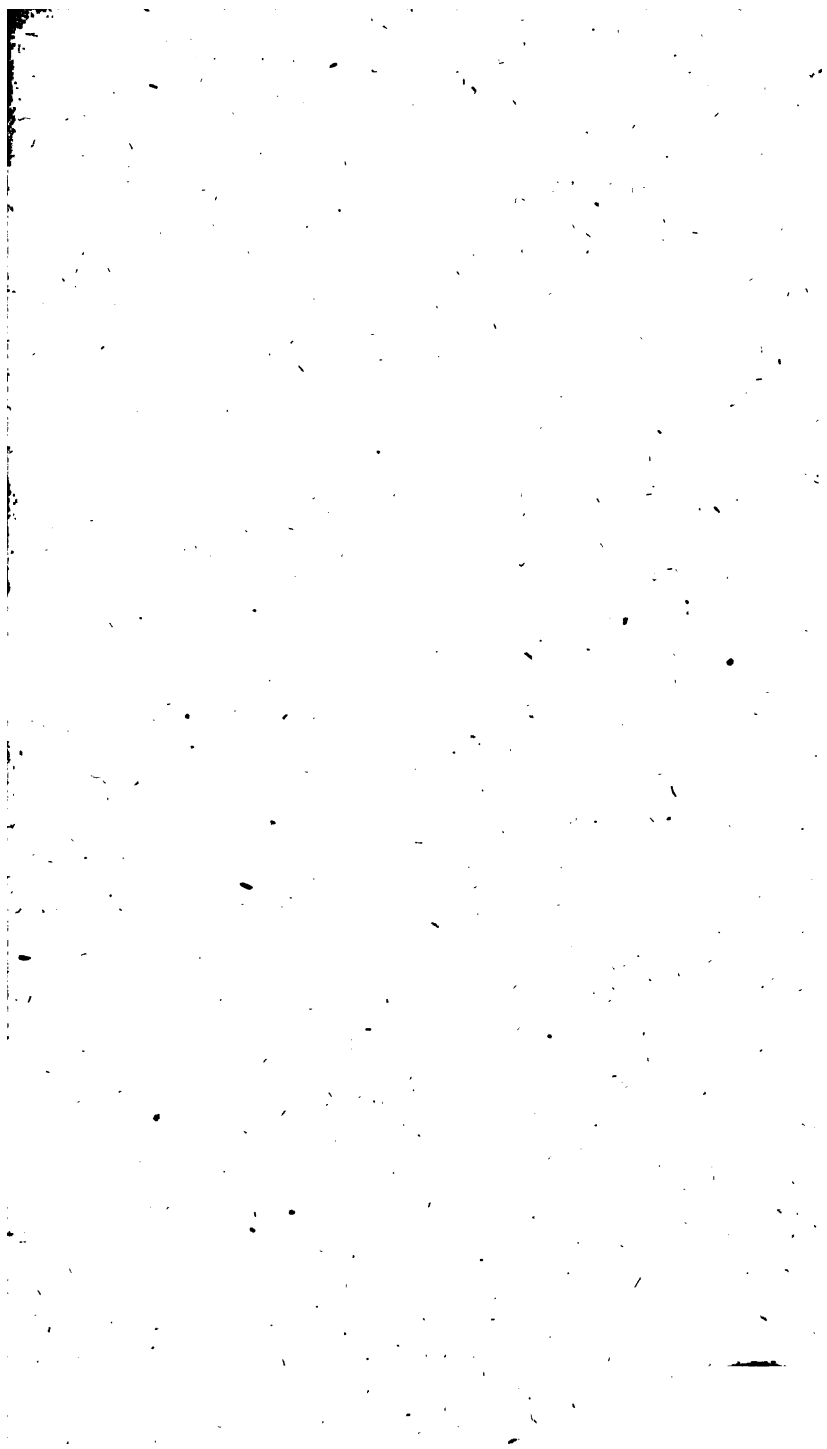
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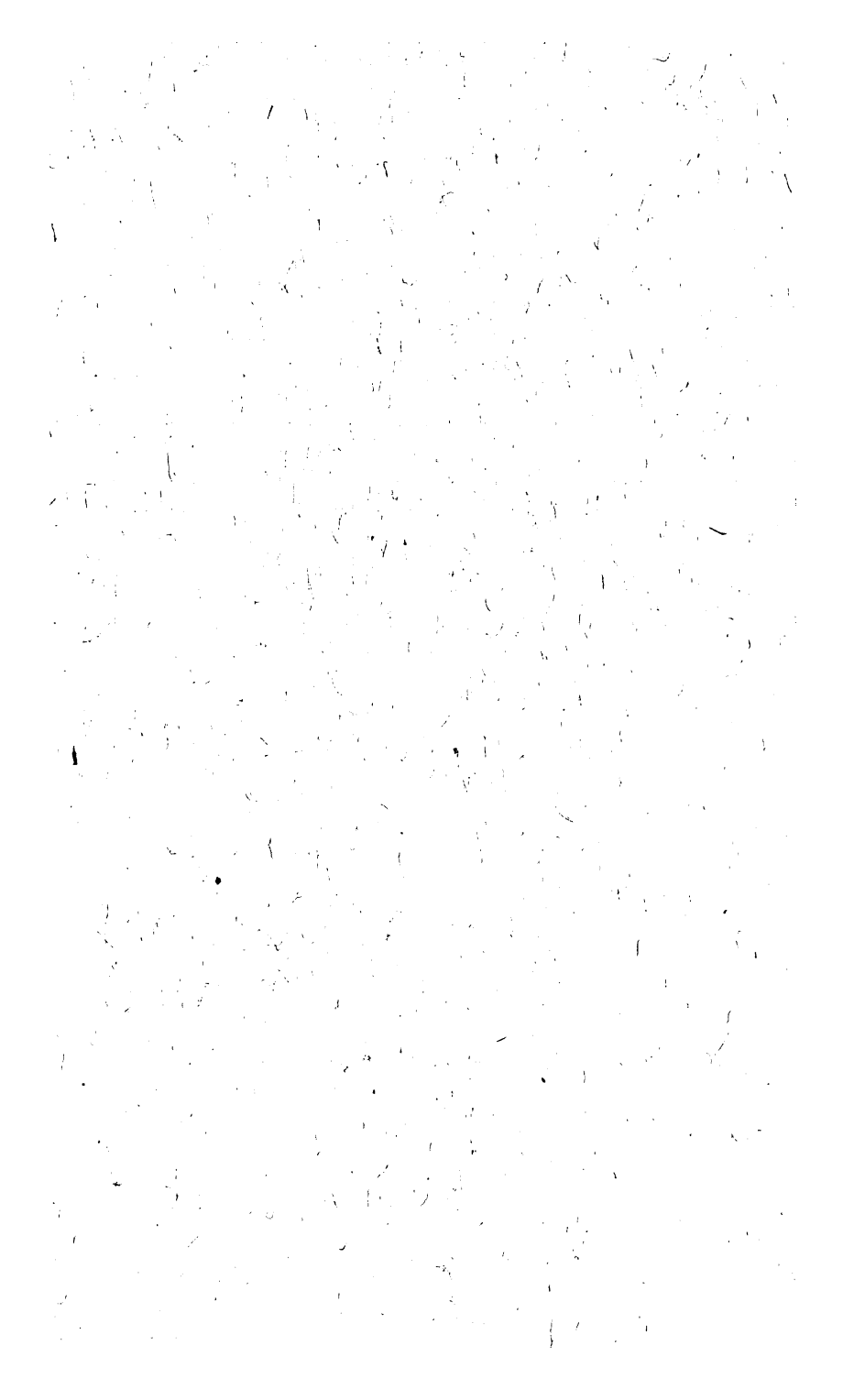
- Page 1. l. 5. } for Fatal Tyranny, read Papal Tyranny.
 4. }
46. The contents of Chap. IV. from *Rumney's opinion of Æschylus*, to the end, were inserted by mistake.
106. for Maid for a Month, read, Wife for a Month.
115. The contents of Chap. VII. are complete no farther than to the bottom of p. 133. they are wanting to p. 149.
249. For supercilious brow, read, supercilious look.
276. *At the end of the Contents of Chap. XIV. dele "Over-sight of the Author—Death of Glendower;" these two articles being contained in the next chapter.*
307. Instead of balance of a watch's pendulum, read, balance of a watch.



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